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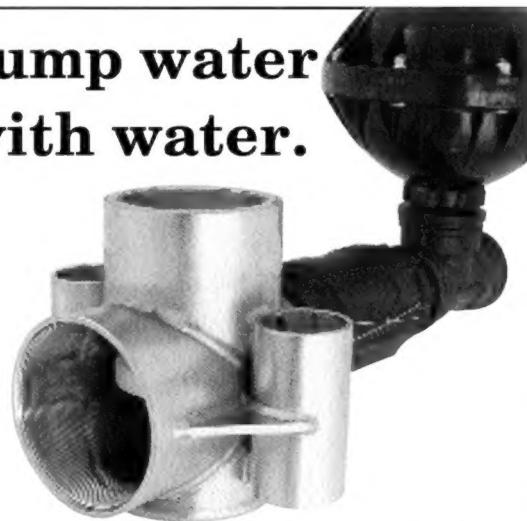
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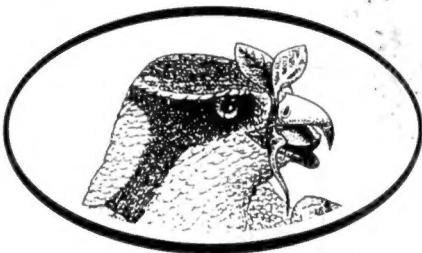
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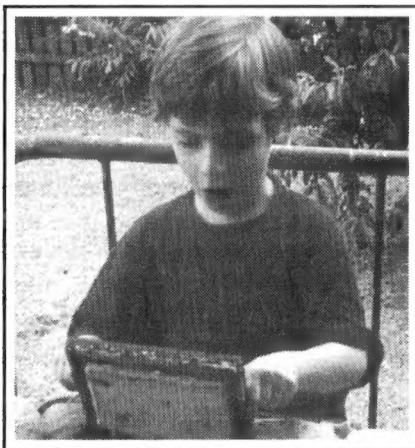
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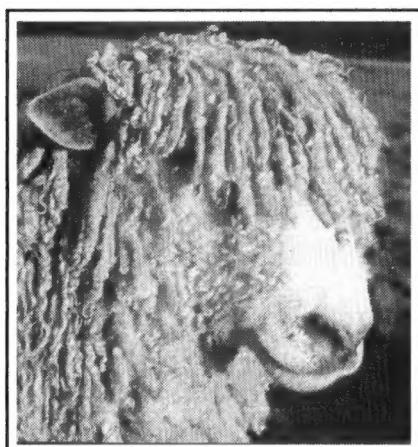
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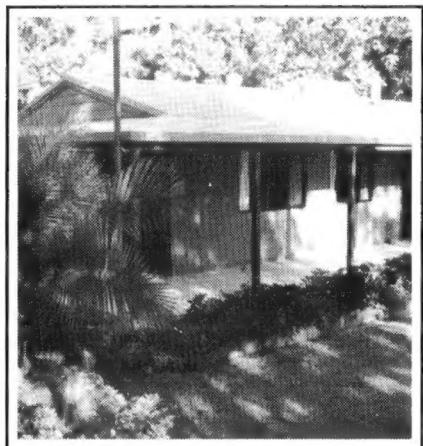
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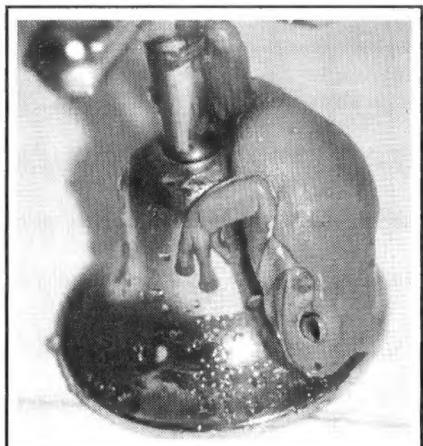
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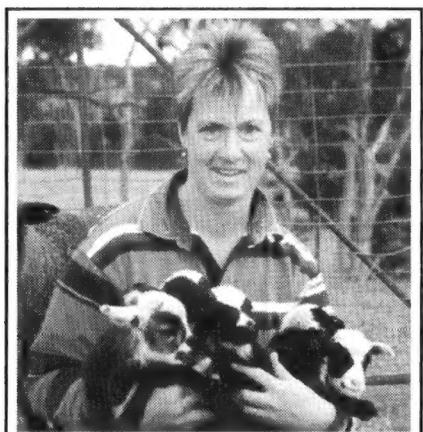
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Front Cover: Jacki Waugh of Boxers Creek, NSW, with a handful of coloured Corriedale lambs and their proud mother. Read about her small flock on page 9. Photo courtesy of *The Land*.

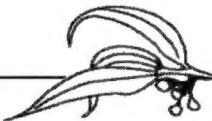
Back Cover: Here's proof that not every sheep looks like a Merino. Our curly fellow is an English Leicester and displays the long, evenly crimped and lustrous staple that characterises the breed. See article page 25. Photo courtesy of Ethel Stephenson.

Edited by Megg Miller and Mary Horsfall.

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GUMNUT GOSSIP

by Megg Miller

'We must be mad, we really must be mad,' Suni muttered, as cold wind whipped around our ankles and magazines flapped wildly. We were touting our wares at a small farms expo and the promised warm weekend had turned cold and blustery. The crowds were sparse and we'd had our fill of cardboard cappuccinos and baked potatoes and just wanted to go home. It's a big ask running a stall for a weekend, but usually the two expos we go to each year are months apart and the sacrifice of losing a weekend is no big deal. This year they were only weeks apart and, well, we're expo'd out. They're a great opportunity to meet readers and discuss the content of the magazine and the role GR has played in many lives. In fact, at the earlier expo a fellow had introduced himself and said, 'You've probably forgotten but I was with the article on the log splitter and met you years ago...' Then, this past weekend, a couple shyly introduced themselves saying they had met via the Contacts and it had been the best thing to happen to them, they were so happy.

It was gratifying listening to squeals of joy as people discovered a back copy they wanted, or, in one case, a whole lot of them. The excited couple had rushed off to phone a relative and instruct them to go and write down the numbers of the GRs in the bookshelves. They turned up an hour later with their list and proceeded to fill cardboard boxes with long-sought issues. Sue and Sabrina staff our stall on the first day of our local Seymour Expo and the event is one they look forward to greatly. Suni and I do the weekend days and usually enjoy them. The unexpected cold this past weekend numbed our sense of humour as well as our bodies, and the wind, of course, wrought havoc. Suni likes an ordered stall, all the magazines set out in chronological order; I can't set them out as I'm too sloppy. They were done with much flair and symmetry, until the wind had them flapping and jumping queues. 'Thank God it's over,' we said after packing up, as we fled to our vehicles and the comfort of a heater!

Naturally, we were grateful to see rain and experience lower temperatures after months of hot summer, and hoped those who suffered or were caught up with the bushfires were benefiting from similar conditions. I'm sure every reader followed the news bulletins and prayed that the infernos would be speedily contained. I'm sure too those who could help did. Catching a news bulletin on a friend's TV I was amazed to see and recognise the speaker from the cover of an earlier GR. Neil Padbury, who featured in GR 146, was advising community members about the approaching fires and precautionary steps to be taken. Our thoughts are with the many people who suffered in the various conflagrations and are now faced with picking up the pieces. We hope the practical problems can be sorted out and that personal pain eases. It's been a hell of a time for the individuals and communities affected.

When we started putting this issue together we wondered how we would manage, being a pair of hands (and eyes) short following Sally's resignation. As Suni wasn't flat chat she was roped in to help out. We fondly imagined we'd be initiating her into our production schedule and way of tackling things. Bedlam has reigned, stress, headaches and sniffles have abounded, and we've all been exhausted, but ahead of schedule and looking good. I don't quite know who's initiated whom, but it's sure to get easier and smoother. Meanwhile, what happened to the quiet simple office life?

We've offered a new service to our livestock-orientated readers this issue. Our sheep articles have been very successful, profiles on chook breeds are always popular, and the story we did on the Large Black pigs in GR 141 is still attracting enquiries – Sue and Don say they've received over 100 calls about them. We want to encourage breed clubs and associations to let readers know of their existence. If you read about or happen to like a particular cow or goat, it's often difficult to track down further information and breeders. Not all studs or breeders are keen to service

the small landholder, so we're hoping those who want to sell to this end of the market will promote their stock in our breeder listing. There is no sense encouraging readers to take on less common breeds if stock can't be found. We have our fingers crossed that this will be a helpful addition to GR.

We're unashamedly sheepy this time around, but it's an ideal time to dust off the spinning wheel, get it serviced before winter and start thinking about spinning. The coloured wools and products made from them that we saw on sale at the expos have been fabulous. And if Suni had taken along her fingerless gloves this past weekend she would have been warmer. Yes, they're made from coloured Romney wool and look and feel good. My favourite breed of sheep – well, one of them – is the English Leicester, which is our feature heritage sheep this issue. The fleece is ideal for dolls' hair and in fact used to be sent overseas for making into dolls' wigs, so look out for it if you have some hairless dolls, or the youngsters in the family like making and dressing dolls and soft toys.

It's reassuring that life holds mysteries to tantalise and fill us with enthusiasm, but we have two lots of mystery photos and their presence is puzzling rather than exciting. One is a single picture of a dome-like structure in bushland, while the second envelope holds a number of photos showing growing trees with different forms of protection. Who, what and where? Mary keeps shuffling them around her desk and would love to hear from their owners.

Among the papers I've been busily shuffling is a reminder – don't forget to mention 30 years. Yes, we celebrate 30 years of *Grass Roots* next issue and would love to hear from readers who picked up that first modest copy all those years ago. I overheard Suni telling visitors to our stall that the magazine had been published for almost 30 years, so it was older than she was. Bless her, that's true. We look forward to celebrating this auspicious milestone next issue. ¶

Welcome To My Wonderland

by Julia Hancock, Uki, NSW.

Many readers dream of finding that special place in the country, and some realise their dream when they find a town or a property that immediately resonates for them. Julia Hancock describes her serendipitous discovery of the charming country village of Uki as feeling like 'coming home'. Share Julia's enthusiasm as she becomes contentedly acclimatised to country life, through the 'hard yakka' of establishment and the 'frilly bits' of garden decor to, ultimately, having time to start a local garden club.



In August 1996 (GR 116) I wrote an article, called 'Doing it for Myself', about my backyard in Sydney, a tiny oasis in the concrete jungle of the inner city. That garden was inspired by many years of reading *Grass Roots* and ended with the hope, shared with many other readers, of one day moving to the country. At the end of 1997 that dream was realised when I moved to the Far North Coast of New South Wales.

WHERE THE @#\$% IS UKI?

This was the universal exclamation from friends, family and colleagues

when I announced I was leaving Sydney to start a life in this delightful country village. Uki (pronounced Youk-eye) is the sort of place you stumble across quite by chance and, once seen, is never forgotten. For me it was like coming home, for the scenery was very reminiscent of the West Country of England where I grew up – rolling green hills, cows in the meadows and narrow roads with spectacular views around every corner. This was it. I was lucky enough to purchase a small house on 1.25 acres, which had just about everything on my wish list. The

dwelling was relatively new and the small amount of work it needed was nothing that couldn't wait. The block was large enough for privacy, but small enough for easy maintenance. Immediately I could envisage the kind of garden I would create there.

HARD YAKKA

Having lived for years in Sydney, my urge to get dirt under my fingernails was irresistible, so the garden was my first priority. Starting in the areas nearest the dwelling, all the unsuitable and invasive plants around the house and in



The garden is a productive pastiche of ornamental and food plants based on permaculture and organic principles.

the front garden were removed, namely weeping figs, bougainvillea and umbrella trees. The flat areas in the back garden that were once goat paddocks were brush-cut, and subsequently mowed, until the weeds took on the semblance of a lawn. Gradually, working outwards towards the rear of the block, the camphor laurel, privet and lantana that infested the hillside were hacked back. Until these species were controlled there was no point doing any planting.

During that first summer, daytime temperatures rarely fell below 45° C, exceptionally hot even for this latitude. Despite the lack of rain, the hillside was planted up with tubestocks (mainly natives and bush tucker species), which were watered once then left to fend for themselves. Remarkably few died.

Mapping out the garden beds was the easy part; edging them with camphor logs and smothering out the weeds inside by sheet mulching with newspaper, cardboard and sugar cane tops was laborious, but effective. By March 1998, when the rains finally arrived, these beds were ready for planting.

Next came the frilly bits. An orna-

mental pond, rockeries, an orchard, raised vegetable beds, flower beds, a Japanese garden, a palm grove and shrub borders all started to take shape. I installed a micro-irrigation system to keep the fruit trees, vegetables and annual and perennial flowers alive in dry times.

AN EMBARRASSMENT OF RICHES

Did someone say glut? That first year I produced so many vegetables that I had to sell them at Uki markets. Wherever possible I try to practise organic and permaculture principles, and this garden combines ornamental, vegetable, fruit and flower gardening in a companionable, easy-maintenance, low water usage, minimal-cost way. Once I have a mother plant established, I propagate extensively to provide stock for the rest of the garden. Vegetable and flower seeds are saved or allowed to self-sow wherever possible. Cheap and free plants are acquired from markets, roadside stalls and friends.

Beneficial insects are encouraged by growing stinging nettles, nectar-rich flowers and blue, yellow and white flowers. At the back of the property I

have planted species that attract wildlife to the garden.

A compost heap lurks hidden at the back of every bed and border, because I find it much easier to compost on site than to cart materials to a central composting area. Wherever possible I save labour by using the 'chop and drop' method of pruning and mulching.

I recycled every scrap of waste paper, prunings, clippings, mowings and kitchen scraps to gradually build up the soil in areas where it had become sparse and impoverished, so

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now it is vibrant and productive. Compost activators such as comfrey are used to help speed up the decomposition process. A worm farm provides me with all the liquid manure my annual crops demand as well as castings to bulk out potting mixes for pots and hanging baskets.

JOIN THE CLUB

It always takes a while to meet people when you move to a new area, but once the garden was ticking along nicely I had time and energy for social activities. A trip to visit my parents in rural England in July 1998 gave me the opportunity to go to their local village flower show and see at first hand how it had brought the community together. So inspired was I by this enterprise, I founded Uki Garden Club in August 1998, not knowing what kind of a response I'd receive to the flyer I stuck up outside the village shop. Gratifyingly, ten other people also thought it was a good idea and in my living room here at 'Corymbia' a thriving organisation was established.

Today the club has over 40 members, who have come from all parts of Australia to settle in this wonderful part of the Tweed Valley. It provides a friendly venue for newcomers to meet people who have been here for a while, and to glean local knowledge of climate, plants to grow and pitfalls to avoid.

The club meets once a month in a different member's home each time, which is a great way to see private gardens. We have a swap shop for seeds, cuttings, potted plants and produce. A raffle raises money for our public liability insurance and the trips we occasionally take to parks, shows, gardens and nurseries. We have an extensive library of gardening books and videos. Of course, the meetings also give us the chance to enjoy a splendid afternoon tea and a good chat.

Each month I distribute, via email and snail mail, a newsletter keeping those members who can't attend the meetings abreast of our activities. The newsletter also has seasonal planting tips, information on local events of interest, a question and answer section, and articles from contributors within the club.

Uki Garden Club is a member of the Garden Clubs of Australia umbrella group, which has 16 other affiliated clubs here on the north coast. Occasionally, we get together for inter-club activities such as Christmas parties and bus trips. These occasions extend our networks and everyone enjoys them.

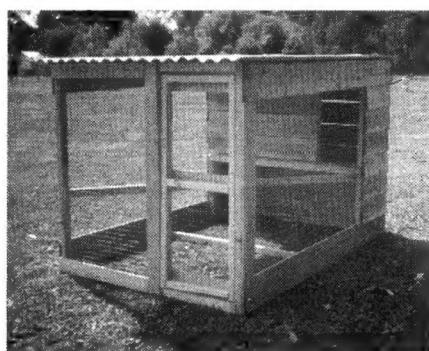
COME AND SEE

Just before I left Sydney I opened my garden through Australia's Open

Garden Scheme and it was such a success that I was determined to do the same with my new garden here. Now, almost six years down the track, I am taking the plunge and opening my gates to the public on 17 and 18 May 2003. The Open Garden Scheme is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to promote gardens and gardening throughout Australia. Since its inception in 1987 it has grown to include over 1000 gardens from all states and territories. Many garden owners who participate choose to donate their profits from the weekend to charities, and often those charities will sell plants, lunches and teas to boost their takings.

As well as opening my own garden, I am also this area's selector for the Open Garden Scheme, which means I travel around the countryside scouting for other gardens to open to the public. I'm pleased to say I've had a terrific response to my canvassing, and have discovered some absolute gems in the region. I didn't have to go far to find another garden to open with mine – just down the road some newcomers to Uki turned out to be permaculture designers! Their wonderful permaculture property 'Ukitopia' blends prettiness with productivity, and is an inspiration to anyone starting their own garden.

'Corymbia' at 4 Sunrise Plc and 'Ukitopia' at 56 Smiths Creek Rd, Uki, will be open on 17 & 18 May 2003, 10am – 4.30pm. Entrance fee for each garden is \$4.50. From Murwillumbah take Kyogle Road; travel 14 kilometres to Uki; turn left into Smiths Creek Road; gardens are on the right. ☺



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Breeding Coloured Sheep

by Jack Miles, Wangaratta, Vic.

Coloured sheep burst into the spotlight at the start of the 1970s when the hand-spinning and weaving movement began and they're still popular today. Jacki Waugh has a small acreage near Goulburn where she runs her flock of multicoloured sheep and, until the drought, they paid for themselves.

Home-spinners seek out coloured wool because they can mix and match the varying hues and colours. Not all coloured wool spins easily or has a desirable feel. Jacki quickly realised that hand-spinners have particular specifications and the Corriedale comes closest to meeting many of their needs. Corriedales carry a medium wool of around 23 micron, the broader crimp making the wool fibres easier to spin than very fine wool like that produced by Merinos.

Jacki's flock carries 17 Corriedales at present and achieves very high lambing percentages, 200 percent last season. Lambing figures for the breed are usually closer to 90 – 130 percent. Jacki's ewes generally produce twins after their maiden year, and some ewes triplets and just occasionally quintuplets. There doesn't seem any special reason for the high fertility, though it is usually associated with a rising plane of nutrition prior to mating. This can't be the sole factor as the rams run with the flock year round.

Jacki wasn't new to the issues of



farming when she bought her first coloured sheep in 1996. She grew up on a grazing property running cattle and a few sheep at Carrick. The coloured sheep really appealed and so three lambs were hand-reared and formed the nucleus of the flock. Now that there are 20 ewes in the flock, plus rams, excess animals are sold. Female lambs find eager buyers among hand-spinners and wethers are sold in the yards at Goulburn, fetching prices of \$40 each.

The coloured flock is kept on the 16-hectare small farm at Boxers Creek, 10 kilometres north of Goulburn in the Southern Tablelands, which Jacki and husband Peter moved to 10 years ago. They were keen to raise their children in the country where a variety of pets could be kept and Peter, being a truck driver, needed space to park large vehicles. The 16 hectares has proved ideal and supports a couple of ponies, donkeys, alpacas and Lowline cattle as well as poultry and guinea pigs.

And what about the fleeces produced by the Corriedales? As Jacki has made colour her main breeding objective, fleeces of black, grey or multicolour are direct marketed at either the farm gate or wool days

WHAT IS A CORRIE DALE?

It is one of the breeds that cater for both the meat and fibre market and is reputed to be the second most common pure sheep breed in the world.

Corriedales were developed almost simultaneously in New Zealand and in Australia between the 1860s and 1880s. Long-wool sheep and Merinos were crossed and through judicious breeding and selection the hardy Corriedale was created. The breed produces a heavy-cutting, high-yielding wool that's soft to handle. Staple length is around 75 – 125 millimetres, which is a comfortable length for hand-spinning and, when combined with the even crimp, makes it an attractive wool.

Corriedales also produce an excellent carcass that can be grown for a range of markets.

The Australian sheep industry is proactive about eliminating specimens that display coloured fibres or carry genes to produce nonwhite wool. The presence of coloured fibres downgrades the value of commercial fleece and in turn profitability. Coloured Corriedales are not all that common for these reasons and are usually only kept by hand-spinners. ¶

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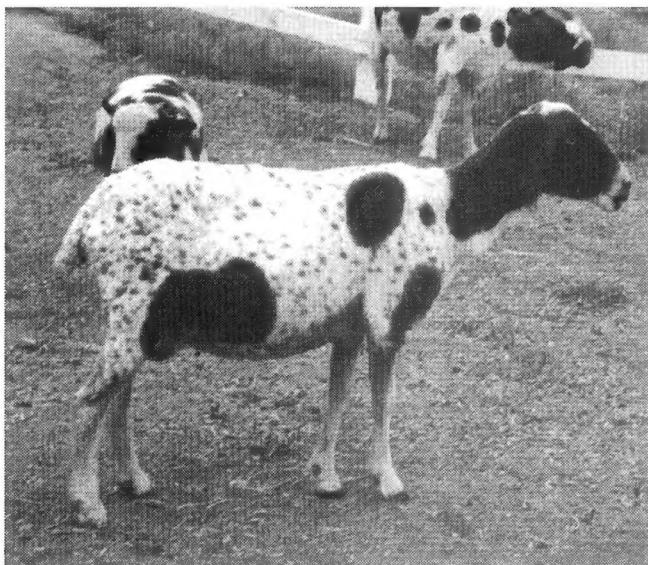
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organised by her local group, the South Coast and Southern Tablelands Black and Coloured Sheep Breeders. On the rare occasions there is fleece left over, it is sold through a local wool broker. Jacki finds the better quality fleeces sell for up to \$10 a kilogram. With the average cut from each sheep being around three kilograms, the dollars gained from sale of fleece, plus lambs, comes to a tidy sum each year. Not surprisingly, she sees her coloured sheep as being a self-sufficient enterprise.



The rounded shape and random dispersal of spots on this ewe suggest piebald genetics.

HOW DO COLOURED SHEEP OCCUR?

You've probably driven past flocks of sheep and noticed a black or black and white lamb in the flock. They certainly stand out in white-fleeced flocks. Where do they come from and why do they occur?

Basically, they're the result of two recessive genes. Both the ram and the ewe mother carried a recessive gene for colour, though neither parent may have shown any evidence of coloured fibres. Merino sheep flocks occasionally have black lambs appear and it is believed that about six percent of the breed are carriers of the recessive gene for black. An indication of the possibility of a sheep being a carrier of coloured fleece is increased pigmentation on the nose, usually showing up as coloured spots.

Coloured sheep are not always solid black, that is, black all over. There are a number of recognisable colour patterns, and there are brown or Moorit fleeces or variations of them, including chocolate, cinnamon and fawn. The genetics of the different colours and patterns gets quite complex, but is fascinating too. Any wonder owners of coloured sheep get so enthusiastic about their ovine charges.

Common Colour Patterns

Piebald: Pigmented spots that vary in size, are rounded in shape and distrib-

uted randomly over the body. Spots are usually black or grey, and frequently accompanied by tan leg fibres.

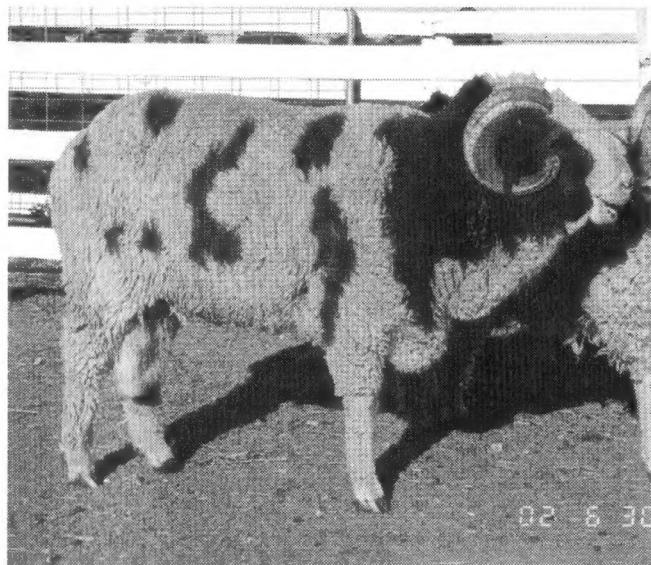
Badger Face: Black or dark fibres over eyes and continuing to ears, on lower jaw, legs and belly. The rest of the fleece is lighter coloured or nonpigmented.

Reverse Badger Face: There is light coloured wool on the poll and flowing down the face in a V-shape, the inside of the ears, on the chest and down to the belly and on flanks. Feet are often light coloured too.

Self Colour: This in effect is solid colour, but more frequently there are patches of pale wool on the top of the head and on the chest. These latter patches are often described as the baldy pattern. They may also be a spotted pattern which has a symmetrical pattern on the head and patches of light or white wool.

Moorit: Brown-fleeced sheep have been less common in Australia than the other colours and patterns. Shades of brown vary from fawn (milk coffee brown) to cinnamon (tan) to chocolate (deep rich brown).

You can get coloured fleece from Merinos and their crosses, Corriedales and most of the long-wooled British breeds. Three heritage breeds that have been featured in GR — Romney, Perendale and English Leicester — can all be sourced with coloured fleeces.



Spotting genes may be responsible for the regular facial markings and irregularly shaped patches.

The wool of these differs from the Corriedale and Merino in that it is highly lustrous and so looks particularly appealing when knitted up or woven.

There are black and coloured wool groups in many parts of rural Australia. Ask your local agricultural society for the names of exhibitors of coloured sheep or fleeces in your area, or consult the library for details of hand-spinning groups. Alternatively, the Royal Agricultural Society in your capital city should be able to assist. ¶

FOR SALE

A flock of rare blue-eyed Piebald sheep.



This project started 20 yrs ago & incl selection for blue-eyed specimens. Due to the current difficult conditions, the flock must be dispersed. The flock comprises 9 ewes, 2 rams, 5 female lambs, 1 entire male lamb and 3 wether lambs. The sheep are at Gympie, Qld.

Enquiries: Wendy Henningsen,
ph: 07-5483-3600, fax: 0500-599-339,
mob: 0500-533-339.

Basic Plant Guilds

by Dianne Davis, Kirkstall, Vic.

You want to lovingly tend plants in your garden, make it productive and provide yourself, friends and family with beautiful fresh produce. In your dream garden you would produce luscious fruit, vegetables and herbs. Somehow, though, the dream never turns to reality because it all seems a little too much work. Well, it does not have to take hours of toil tending rows of perfectly positioned vegetables. It merely requires good design, an improved use of available space and some knowledge of plants and how they might work together.

There are many combinations of edible plants that will work in harmony and provide abundant and varied crops without a lot of digging and watering. One that has worked well for me involves a circular design that contains a deciduous fruit tree in the centre. Planted around it is a combination of selected vegetables and herbs. In my garden I have kept it simple by including one of each, thereby making a basic guild.

To do this, first select your tree. An appropriate choice would be an apple, peach, plum or whatever deciduous fruit tree you prefer. For the system to work it has to be a variety that does not grow too large and has a reasonably vigorous root system. Then plant a globe artichoke approximately 60 centimetres from the trunk. In my Mediterranean climate the globe artichoke grows through the winter then starts to bear the edible flower heads in early spring right through to early summer when they start to dry off. After that the heads are not much good for eating, but do provide me with beautiful, enormous purple flowers. Because I rely on natural rainfall they then die back. I cut the leaves and stems of the plant back and use them to make a wonderful mulch rich in minerals from the subsoil for the base of the tree. The artichoke will not compete with the fruit tree for moisture in late summer and autumn. It is also more deeply rooted than the tree, an advantage in



A simple guild of an apple tree, artichoke and garlic. Drawing by Keith Davis.

this partnership.

Now introduce garlic to complete the basic guild. Planting a few cloves around the base of the tree will provide you with plenty of garlic for your own use. In my climate, it is harvested from late spring to early summer and any plants not harvested will just reshoot in autumn. Or you can transplant some unused cloves and the cycle will continue with just a little care and attention. The garlic also acts as a natural pest deterrent and inhibits grass from growing in your edible circle.

For this system to work you need to mulch around the tree, nice and neatly because a productive garden does not have to be a messy garden. A

good mulch with some pea straw or lucerne hay will feed your plants and suppress weeds.

You could even make this guild a feature for everyone to see in front of your house. There are many other combinations that could work well including self-seeding herbs like borage, or annual flowers such as calendula. Many vegetables will self-seed readily – radish, lettuce and parsnips are a few. The guild you choose all depends on selecting combinations that will work together in your climate.

Many people don't quite know how to prepare or cook globe artichokes, so I have included a simple recipe. Beware, they sometimes possess some

spines. Preparing them is a labour of love, as it does take time, but if you enjoy pulling things apart this will not be a problem.

ARTICHOKE IN TOMATO SAUCE

Obtain six globe artichokes, ideally home-grown and freshly picked. Prepare them by peeling off all the tough outer leaves until a lot of creamy colour is showing, then cut $\frac{1}{2}$ off the top, and slice down the middle. The artichokes, depending on their age, may have some furry white choke (the developing seeds) that needs to be removed. Then cook them in some good tomato cooking sauce to which you have added some of your home-grown garlic for extra flavour. Cook until tender.

This makes a nice side dish to meat or fresh fish, but if you are a vegetarian enjoy it with lots of fresh crusty bread. ☺

GUILDS IN THE GARDEN

In medieval Europe a guild was an association of merchants or artisans, formed for mutual aid and protection and to maintain craft standards. Permaculturists have adopted the term to describe a garden design idea. It is an assemblage of several species, plant and/or animal, around a central element, usually a tree, where all elements complement each other. If the central element is a fruit tree, complementing species might be planted beneath it to repel pests, attract pollinators, act as mulch or add nitrogen to the soil. The tree itself will give shade to the species below, can act as a support for climbing plants, will drop mulch and

perhaps provide wind protection. Rocks and ponds added to the guild will provide water and habitat for beneficial predators and help create a more even temperature for the surrounding plants. Domestic animals such as poultry or guinea pigs can be introduced at appropriate times to eat crop remnants, scratch out pests and fertilise the soil.

A guild can be very simple, such as the one described here by Dianne Davis, or it can be a complex, strictly synchronised design aimed at maximum garden productivity, as described by Linda Woodrow in her book, *The Permaculture Home Garden*. ☺

Autumn Planting Tips

by Neil Barracough.

March and April can be a great time for the home gardener to set up the vegie patch. Instead of just planting broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower, which are big nitrogen feeders and have to be harvested all at once, why not plant vegetables that lend themselves to a longer harvest period? Just picking a few leaves or roots as needed, and not having to use large amounts of fertiliser is a real bonus.

For leafy greens, try planting the

Oakleaf and Cos varieties of lettuce now. Mizuna, kale, collards, wong bok, tatsoi, mibuna and pak choi are good greens to plant now and can be used in stir-fries and salads. Kale and chicory add plenty of colour to the garden.

Radishes, including the Daikon varieties, and kohlrabi are good to grate in salads and usually last well into the winter. Peas can be planted too and should crop well before frosts prevent the flowers from setting pods. If frosts are not a problem in your area, then try broad beans as well.

Celery is best planted in the autumn months. Silverbeet planted now will be good for a winter and early spring harvest, while English spinach is best grown now, but not in an acid soil. Be careful when transplanting because it does not like being handled.

Onions, spring onions and leeks are great companion plants to sow now with leafy greens and members of the cabbage family, but definitely not with peas or beans.

If planting in April rather than

March, make sure you utilise areas with good sunlight and drainage. May is beginning to get a bit late for planting and it is best to start seedlings under glass. You could try broad beans, spinach, wong bok, parsley or onions though. ☺



ESCAPE FROM THE CITY by Beverley Collett

The story of a farm named Tathra. An inspirational, moving, and often funny account of three generations living, learning and working together, farming, building a house and establishing a fruit winery and restaurant.

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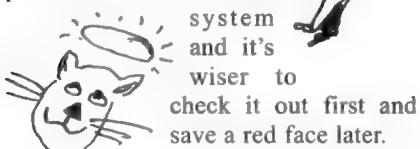


Repairing A Leaky Loo

Part 1: Outside The Cistern

by Kel Connell, Karuah, NSW.

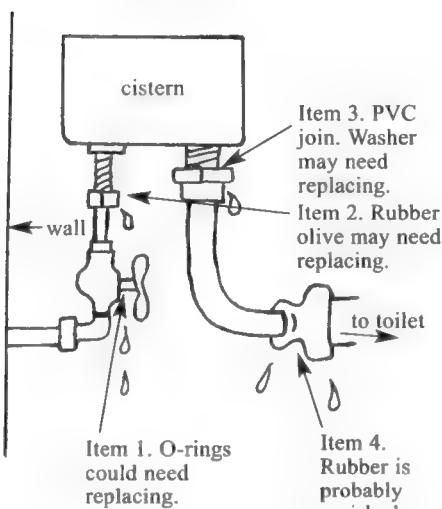
Water on the toilet floor? How disgusting! Don't be too quick to blame grandfather's incontinence or the family pet. It could be the cistern



system and it's wiser to check it out first and save a red face later.

LOCATION OF LEAKS

Leaks were measured once by the number of drops per minute. They can trickle down a pipe and drip off the lowest bend. This is a good spot to feel for wetness, which indicates there is a leak higher up. Of course, I am referring to plumbing, not, grandfathers. Water on the toilet floor would most likely come from four places: two on the water inlet piping (items 1

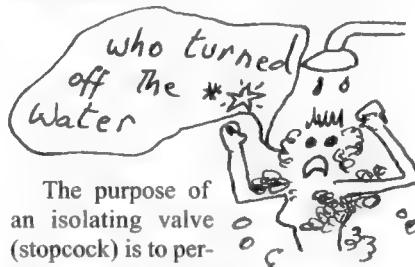


and 2) and two on the cistern water-out-to-toilet piping (items 3 and 4).

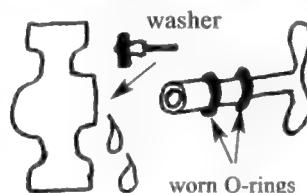
Item One

Item 1 is an isolating valve, with similar internal workings to a tap. Unlike a

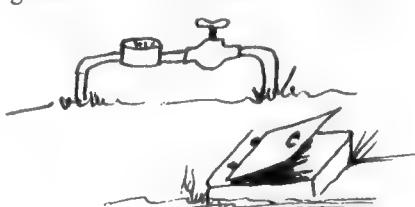
tap, it does not have a spout, often referred to as a 'stopcock' (plumbing and engineering were originally men-only realms).



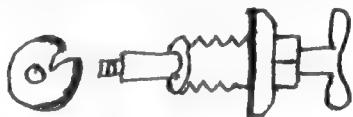
The purpose of an isolating valve (stopcock) is to permit water to pass through while allowing the water flow to be shut off, thereby isolating the cistern unit. This allows repairs to be carried out without turning the water off at the main, which would disconnect the water supply to the whole building. Isolating valves rarely leak because they are seldom turned off, therefore there is minimal friction on moving parts.



Rubber O-rings might deteriorate with age and, if in need of replacement, drips will occur from the valve handle shaft. O-rings are easily replaced by rolling them up the shaft into special grooves. Of course, to replace O-rings the water supply will need to be shut off at the main, which is usually near the front gate but could be underground in a box. Should the internal



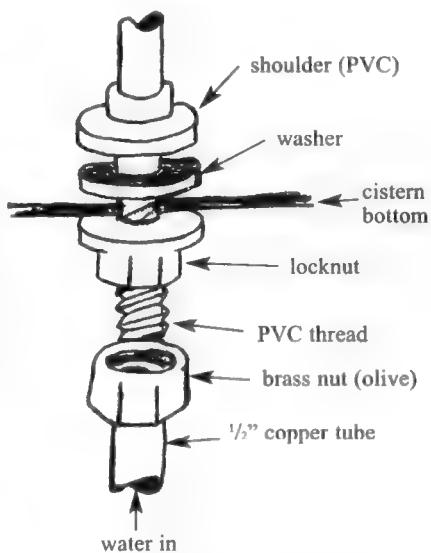
(tap) washer be worn, water would still trickle through when the isolating valve is closed, but probably not enough to prevent repairs unless it's very severely worn or ruptured. If this is the case, refer to 'Fix a Leaking Tap'



in GR151. Note that O-rings might appear to be undersize, however, they are designed that way to be stretched onto the shaft for a tight fit.

Item Two

Item 2 is the pipe join connecting inlet water piping to the cistern. This join rarely leaks (unless roughly disturbed). The PVC shoulder compresses the rubber washer when the locknut is tightened, preventing water leaking out from the cistern. The brass nut might have an 'olive' inside. An olive is similar to an O-ring; it is compressed when the nut is tightened.



When a nut is tightened the energy of turning causes reactions: The

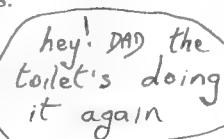
threaded stud is compressed slightly (further turning it), which has an expanding (exploding) effect on the



nut. If the nut is overtightened, the thread can be stripped off the threaded stud, rendering it useless. Be gentle. There is a time when the nut is tight. *Don't force it!* If the thread is stripped or the nut is stretched, it has lost its sealing ability and must be replaced. A slightly stripped thread or slightly stretched nut can cause a sneaky leak (one drop every two minutes). Leaks are not always obvious so check the lowest drip-off points.

Item Three

This join is usually PVC tube, thread and nut; it rarely leaks. PVC is so easily compressed the locknut could almost be sealed using hands only. I

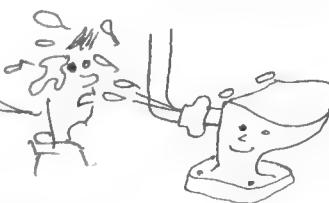


said 'almost'. This pipe carries flushing water to the toilet and is sealed inside the cistern by a flexible rubber washer. Water only flows through this tube during flushing, so leaks at points 3 and 4 are not obvious and could well be the cause of suspicious glances and accusations.

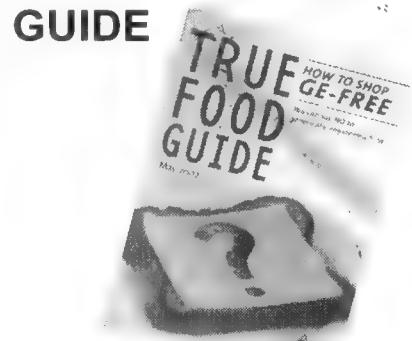
Item Four

At item number 4 the rubber connector needs to accommodate two very different diameters so the rubber is soft and spongy, easily stretched for a snug fit. These connectors seem to have a tendency to perish and could need replacing if a leak develops.

Next time I'll discuss leaks from within the cistern. ■



GE-FREE FOOD GUIDE



Readers might be interested in obtaining this free booklet, compiled by Margaret Fulton in association with GeneEthics and Greenpeace. The *True Food Guide* rates companies according to their policies on the use of genetically engineered ingredients. Over 170 food companies and 400 products are classified in this pocket-sized publication. Copies are available from Greenpeace: 1800-815-151, or GeneEthics: 1300-133-868. ■

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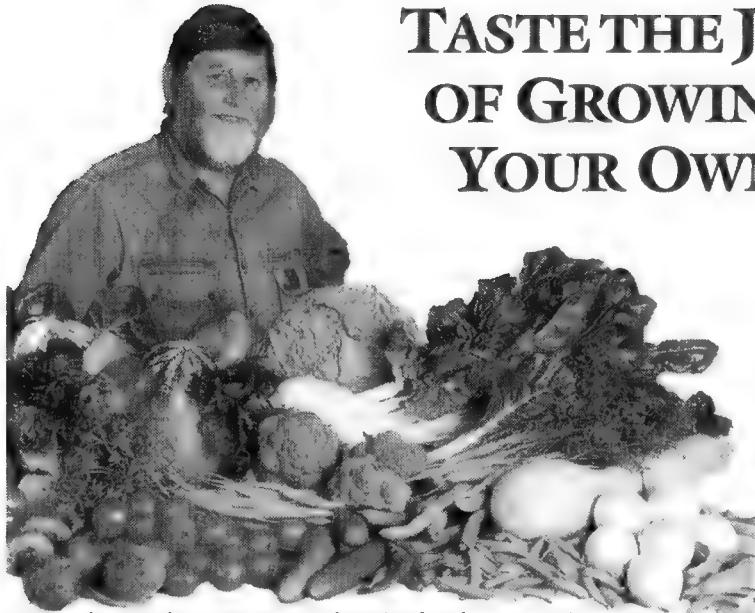
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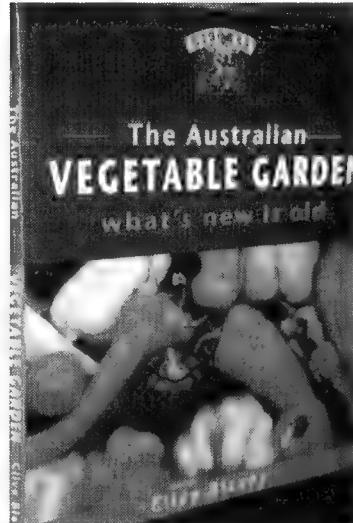
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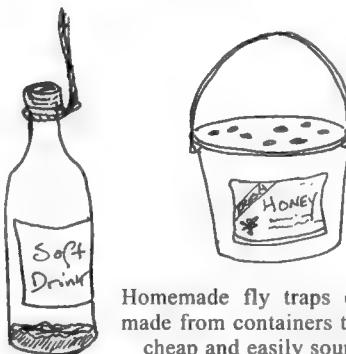
FIGHT THE FRUIT FLY

by Neville Jackson, Valhalla.

The fruit fly, *Drosophila melanogaster*, long the favourite laboratory animal of the scientific world, is the common scourge of fruit growers around the globe. Researchers favour the fruit fly for laboratory study because they are cheap to reproduce and their genetic code has been known for some years. In fact, more research papers have been published about various aspects of fruit fly genome than any other creature. This led me to comment to UK researchers that while they might well program fly cell growth to grow longer legs or shorter wings, perhaps they could insert a terminator gene so that fruit flies die before they mate. This would earn them the gratitude of orchardists worldwide and likely more grant money than aberrant limbs on an insect.

FRUIT FLY TRAP RECIPES

- Suspend a two-litre ice cream container one-quarter full of water, on a tree or fence. Stir in a teaspoon of live yeast powder (Dribarm is okay). Replace lid. In the top of the lid make two tiny holes, too small for bee ingress.
- Quarter-fill soft-drink bottles with water and add two tablespoons of vinegar or molasses. Punch holes in bottles. Suspend bottles in trees in orchard.
- Another useful bait is banana peel plus a teaspoon of honey or two tea-



Homemade fly traps can be made from containers that are cheap and easily sourced.

spoons of sugar stirred into enough water to cover peel. Though a banana skin won't fit into a soft-drink bottle, you could use a honey bucket or similar plastic container. Make small holes in the top for fruit flies to enter.

• Place half a teaspoon of vanilla essence and one teaspoon cloudy ammonia in 1½ cups water in a suitable container. Make small entry holes as before.

Check containers for evaporation each month and remove dead flies.

MORE TIPS

A passionfruit vine will help eliminate fruit fly juveniles in an area. When the females sting the fruit a hard callus forms around the bite. This callus prevents development of the grub but does not affect the fruit quality.

We place fruit fly traps around the perimeter of the orchard rather than

just inside it. This helps kill the adults before they attack our fruit. Herbal deterrents such as feverfew, tansy, marigold and pyrethrum planted between our fruit trees deter pests in gardens and orchard.

Poultry scratch up and devour fruit fly larvae so mulch around trees does have to be continuously replaced after the birds scatter it and there may be some damage to roots near the surface. We prefer a stone mulch where poultry have access.

All fallen fruit must be regularly picked up. Those windfalls in good condition can be used for cider or perry. 'Buggy' fruit can be given to pigs or should be destroyed. We burn all our fruit debris to ensure continued good health in our orchard. This good housekeeping eliminates most bacterial and fungal problems.

For more information on fruit fly control see GR 112. ☺

SUN EXPOSURE

The World Health Organisation has issued a medical alert warning that the use of sun block creams is not as effective as previously thought. Use of the creams reduces sunburn but does not correlate with a reduction in risk of skin cancers such as basal cell carcinoma and cutaneous melanoma. ☺



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Exploring Rural Enterprises

The Sapphire Coast Producers Association

by John Champagne, Bega, NSW.

The Sapphire Coast Producers Association (SCPA, pronounced scarpa) was formed in the Bega Valley, NSW, in March 1993. It exists to allow members the opportunity to explore a variety of rural enterprises that could loosely be termed 'alternative' industries. In its ten-year history two important cornerstones have emerged, which have contributed to its success so far: first, that any industry development adopts a cooperative approach among members, and second, that it promotes and adopts sustainable farming practices in the process.

The Bega Valley has traditionally been famous for its cheese manufacturing and the dairy industry remains the vital contributor towards the local economy. The past 20 years, however, have seen a steady stream of new arrivals moving onto smaller acreages in search of other potential income options. Often these new arrivals (including myself) came with ideals of self-sufficiency and in search of a better lifestyle than that of the consumption-focused city left behind. We soon found school fees, cars, holidays, shoes and petrol became essential requirements after the idealism of early establishment came face-to-face with reality. Financial needs of do-it-yourself house and food garden construction are nowhere near as much as those of the average consumer, but some form of income is still needed. Jobs in any country region are hard to come by, so it became necessary to create our own income and markets. We soon realised that for financial sustainability it would be essential to develop rural enterprises with others and not on our own.

The first of these industries under the umbrella of scarpa was native flowers, which became a model that other groups could follow. It and subsequent groups became known as Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Today these



SCPA member Clair Allendi harvesting pink boronia from her native flower plantation.

SIGs include vermiculture, organics and biodynamics, native foods, meat rabbits, aquaculture, wine making and rural tourism. Two of these, vermiculture and meat rabbits, have evolved into fully-fledged commercial cooperative ventures. Some SIGs are more of an information exchange, while others concern themselves with research. Each SIG is able to set the direction of its interest to suit the membership at

that time. The SCPA executive nurtures and oversees the wishes of the SIGs and comprises representatives from each group, who are elected by the entire membership at an annual general meeting. Today we have 180 members across all our SIGs.

As a rule, the executive does not initiate any activity but simply waits for the energy to arrive. This is how SIGs form. Leadership, as always,

plays a crucial role in this process and without the important ingredient of passion it becomes difficult to sustain. We have been fortunate to have had excellent drivers of these groups, who also had the ability to pass the baton to others when burnout became evident. Remember, we are volunteers in the business of regional development.

A fantastic by-product of our activities over the past decade has been the diversity of produce we have developed within the region. We have been successful in creating incomes and jobs where none existed before, and at the same time have developed a local cuisine that has made the Bega Valley more self-reliant as a region. This concept is vibrantly illustrated each year when we celebrate all aspects of sustainable land use and living at the South Coast Field Days in Cadelo presented by SCPA. Begun in 1995 by two members with permaculture backgrounds, the field days continue to provide a catalyst for change in south-eastern Australia and guide the fringe development of our unique coastline.

Another interesting observation has been the impact of our Rural Tourism Network on other SIGs. By its very nature it has cut across all our groups and value-added to what they were already doing, at the same time giving the many tourists an experience they really enjoy. Two good examples of this activity are the regional tourism

map and open farm days. The map highlights properties of interest, craft outlets, B&Bs to stay in, as well as walks and places of interest to visit. The open days invite visitors to a guided tour of a farm where other SCPA members also set up stalls to sell produce direct to the public. The host farm receives income from gate takings, members sell their products and the tourist enjoys a pleasant experience – a win-win-win outcome.

We realise that the future of SCPA

will depend on the passion of its members to continue and progress, not only with what has been but also with what might be around the corner. It's a very successful network that could be duplicated in other regions and offers a bottom-up approach to creating real wealth where governments on all levels have failed to deliver.

More information about Sapphire Coast Producers Assoc can be found via our website: www.sapphirecoastproducers.com.au



TOPICAL TIPS

SOLAR ENERGY CERTIFICATE

The federal government is offering Renewable Energy Certificates to those setting up solar hot water systems. This means that the certificates can be purchased by electricity wholesalers, who are required by government to increase their use of renewable energy in the community. This results in cash-back payments for anyone installing solar hot water systems. A number of the states and territories also offer rebates. For example, a 300-litre Solahart hot water system installed in Canberra would receive a cash-back payment from the Federal government of between \$850 and \$1000, according to the model, and a further rebate of about \$750 from the ACT authorities. In addition to regular power savings, the 300-litre Solahart hot water system reduces carbon dioxide emissions by five tonnes a year compared to an electric hot water service.

YELLOW FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

As many as 150,000 old yellow fire extinguishers are believed to be still in circulation. These extinguishers have been banned since 1996 because they contain ozone-destroying halon gas. As well, since they will not have been serviced for a number of years, they are likely to be inoperative during an emergency. Anyone who has one of these extinguishers is urged to take it to a staffed fire station or call: 1800-658-084 to arrange safe disposal. Do not try to use it.



ASSESS COMMUNITY HOUSING

The Office of the Public Advocate in Victoria often seeks volunteers to assist with visiting residential services housing people with disabilities. Community visitors assess standards of care in residential services to ensure that residents are treated with dignity and respect and that they are not at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Anyone interested in volunteering is urged to call Megan Archer on 1800-136-829 for more information.

MT ANNAN BOTANIC GARDEN

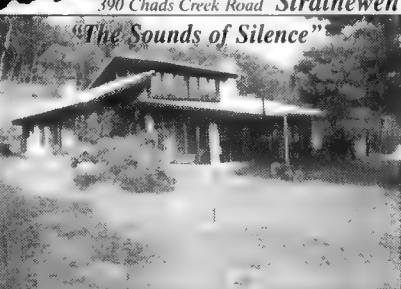
A visit to the 410-acre Mount Annan Botanic Garden in Sydney's south-west (between Campbelltown and Camden) will be an inspiration to anyone wanting to learn more about sustainable horticulture. The Waterwise Garden has been set up to inspire gardeners to use water efficiently. Cultivated using organic practices, the garden includes water-efficient plants, recycled materials and a range of products to help gardeners save this vital resource, while also saving time and money and growing a healthier garden.

ONLINE GARDENING

An online gardening ezine put out by Australian Correspondence Schools is now out: www.ascgarden.com

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Country Place In The Suburbs

by Val Smetheram, Wishart, Qld.

I've dreamed of a place in the country for years. In our poor (only in a monetary sense) wartime village childhood in the UK our parents made or recycled just about everything we needed, and all our fruit and vegetables came from our well-stocked garden at home. There were none available to buy; if you didn't grow them you went without, so all the men of the village tended productive gardens. Even now I cannot think of my father's home-grown tomatoes without salivating: vine-ripened, tender skins and flesh, emerald green seeds the colour of floating weed from our local river, and *what a flavour!* The hard tasteless balls that sell as tomatoes in the shops today don't even come close. I have wonderful memories of a slower almost self-sufficient lifestyle when people had time for each other. A situation, brought about by war, of having to provide for ourselves made everyone more cooperative I feel, and made for a much greater sense of community. Funny how that early life seems more and more desirable the older I get.

My father, when he wasn't at work, was either gardening or repairing our toys or household items or tending poultry. We had ducks at the far end of the garden that kept us supplied with eggs and, sometimes (horrors!) a bird for the table. When I was a child I thought all fathers spent their lives doing the same. Later I discovered that some fathers often went to the pub (some much more than often), but, thankfully, not mine. However, in those far-off innocent days, according to my then limited experience, all families were living frugally like ours, using everything twice or three times, and even then finding yet another use for the item before it ended its life as

compost material or ties for the tomatoes or roses. My dad's passion was his rose garden. Anyone who visited us went away with two or three exquisite blooms from his rose plot.

I remember that chats with neighbours over the garden fence, which were frequent, were almost always about the food supply. What there was, people shared. They were obsessed about having enough food. Understandably. Shortages were extreme and nothing was wasted. Any surplus went to someone who could use it and if there was an oversupply (occasionally) of anything, someone came up with an idea of how to make use of it, when everyone thought they couldn't look another cabbage in

It was life close to the earth, slow, basic . . . and satisfying. It's difficult to relate that to our fast, stressful lives . . . these days.

the face. Almost impossible to explain to a younger generation, in these days of plenty, the absence of goods to buy then.

It was life close to the earth, slow, basic, and, in spite of the ever-present question of whether any of us would be alive tomorrow, satisfying. It's difficult to relate that to our fast, stressful lives in city and suburbs these days. I swear we were more content with much less in those days.

In our lives my partner and I have moved with his work a number of times in the last 20 years. Supplied rental housing and frequent moves (always suburban) are not conducive to serious gardening, but I never lost sight of my dream. In recent years, and now in our own home, my childhood love of plants has developed into a passion. I realise there is masses to learn (not a hardship when you love something). So here I am trying to make our third of an acre productive. Some successes,

some failures, but I keep trying.

Recently, I introduced two newcomers to the garden, the oca (NZ yam) and the arhae pea. Both seem to find our area to their liking. The yams are small and pink and used like potatoes. Arhae peas (from India I believe) grow like small trees. Frequently pruned back, I find they produce masses of pods which I boil whole (as I do ordinary peas) and shell afterwards. Makes the job a lot simpler and quicker. The flavour is something between peas and broad beans.

This year, after several years of crop loss, has seen a super crop of tomatoes. All grown from heritage seed from a seed-saver friend in Victoria. We are

just delighted to be able to step out of the back door and pick our food. I have really appreciated belonging to the Seed-savers Association, sharing seed and gardening tips. I can recommend it, having made some good friends.

Most of my fruit trees are in large tubs (in case we have to move again) and they seem to do well in spite of it. They are very pampered creatures, getting regular feeding and watering and plenty of sunshine. I make use of the space around each tree's base by planting leaf lettuce, silverbeet, carrots, garlic, herbs and other small plants. It's very useful, convenient and easily accessible from the kitchen when I'm cooking. Although they're crammed in, they seem to do quite well. I use lucerne mulch around everything to keep weeds down and compost all my kitchen waste.

Further out I have beans and potatoes, three passionfruit vines and an asparagus bed. Asparagus is lovely raw by the way, which I didn't discover until recently, especially when it's clean and you know there have been no



Val Smetheran is astonished at the amount of food that can be grown on the house block.

sprays on it. I always understood it was difficult to grow, but it hasn't proved to be. At present I only have one clump producing, the rest are new this year.

I have three types of cumquats (wonderful jam) and a jaboticaba (from Brazil). This latter is a gloriously leafy tree which grows black grape-like fruit on its main trunk. It's flourishing here. I saw a superb specimen, loaded with fruit, on the edge of a nursery garden recently. I'm looking forward to mine fruiting for the first time. It's now two years old and just about my height.

Close to the house I have two types of mulberry. The purple one, a little taller than myself, excelled itself pro-

ducing fruit this year. We thoroughly enjoyed robbing the tree every afternoon. The second, a Shahtoot, I have only just acquired, after a couple of years of searching. It produces white fruit like long fat fingers, very sweet and nonstaining – perhaps next season. I shall coddle it carefully till then. Next to them is a Mamey sapote, also only just acquired. This I have to read up on. Next to it are two fig trees and a miraclefruit, a very curious tree with small, oval, deep-red berries the colour of holly berries. A couple of these eaten before a sour fruit makes the sour taste sweet. Even a lemon can be eaten this way. I find it fascinating.

More new introductions this year are peachcot, pimento (also known as all-spice tree, the leaves make wonderful zingy tea, tasting of cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg), ice cream bean, Brazilian cherry, and a chinotto (type of cumquat with larger, round, very sharp tasting fruit, small, unusual shaped leaves for a citrus and very attractive, powerfully perfumed blooms).

My latest discovery is canistel. This apple-sized, orange-coloured tropical fruit is delicious! Some are round, though most seemed to be comma shaped. The flesh, reminiscent of

mashed pumpkin or avocado flesh, is smooth and sweet. I can't describe the flavour, totally different to anything I've ever tasted. I was told it mixes well with ice cream. When I can stop salivating, I'll tell you how good it is. I'm now trying to grow the seeds. Wish me luck!

I have also found room for an olive tree because we're enthusiastic olive eaters. Some of our ancestors must have been from the Mediterranean. We're hoping this one might produce next season; it's about four years old and looks very healthy. There's a custard apple, a pawpaw, two mandarin trees, a lemon and a lime, to say nothing of the tropical raspberry and a few strawberries. I can't believe that we managed to fit all this into our small block, but the collection is growing and it's a very exciting thing to observe.

There are beans, peas, potatoes and yacon in the vegie garden and I'm looking longingly at a patch of lawn at the back to use for more vegies. Now if only I can persuade my partner! You know there really is nothing quite so satisfying as feeding yourself from your own backyard through your own efforts. Perhaps there's a tiny vestige of hunter-gatherer not quite bred out of me. There's that feeling of control, of not being quite so dependent on the supermarket. That wonderful phrase 'self-sufficiency' flashes frequently in my brain. I'm a long way off achieving that, of course, but it's a goal to constantly work towards. We have become lamentably dependent on someone else to supply our food needs. I think all children should be taught in school the basics of how to grow their own food. Self-sufficiency was programmed into me I think from my early wartime days of deprivation.

Walkabout Leather

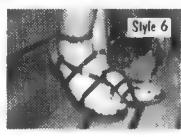
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I try to make use of every available square centimetre in the garden. It amazes me just how much can be fitted in, even growing vines up anything that can support a climbing plant. Don't stand still too long around here! From a very sterile-looking small suburban plot ten years ago, which seemed devoid of plants, birds or animals except ants, last week I was gratified to find a thumbnail size frog in the bromeliads, a blue-tongue under the back step and a pair of glorious blue and yellow parrots, which visited early one morning to make good use of the bathing facilities. They are a real joy to watch.

Our local park at the end of the street still has a number of birds to enjoy. However, some time in the last ten years a whole colony of goannas, some quite large, who had made their home in a gallery of tunnels under the creek bank, seems to have disappeared. Wild ducks, though, seem to survive whatever humans or the elements can throw at them. There are a few waterhens, but not much else. The reptiles have certainly gone, maybe from a diesel spill that happened from someone's carelessness. As a child I remember the pleasure of sitting on the riverbank and trailing my feet in cool water on a hot day. That was in the long-ago. You wouldn't be so eager to do that in our local creek today. But the mulberry tree on the bank still blossoms; the fruits were small this season on account of the drought but still made wonderful jam. How come we never see anyone picking them? Not even the local youngsters. In my childhood we sought out blackberries and when they fruited every kid in the neighbourhood had blue tongues, faces and fingers and ate till they couldn't eat another one. We also filled every container we could carry for jam, bottling, tarts and anything else we could think of. Times change I guess, not always for the better.

More people I hope are realising the importance of caring for the environment. We are part of nature and to care for every living thing is to care for ourselves too. Enjoying the natural things around you and feeling yourself part of the natural scene, working with and not against it, is a philosophy I really like. When you live, as we do, in the suburbs, you are limited by space, cost and

consideration for neighbours, but there are always changes that can be made. I've learnt so much from *Grass Roots* and other alternative lifestyle magazines, for which I'm really grateful. We can all learn and share, whether it's information or plants and cuttings. I've concluded that you can only work with what you have and in the sphere you happen to be in, so if every one of us worked positively we would have to make a difference. I hope to make our small patch attractive to animals and birds, so try to avoid using poisons (they scare me anyway). Nearly always there's a cheaper and safer way to deal with the problem, often using ordinary household materials readily to hand.

My neighbour says she's been inspired by my success in the garden and is working hard on hers. We've shared a number of plants and seeds, and she, being Asian, I hope will be able to teach me a lot more about plants that she's familiar with. Then there's bush tucker. I really haven't begun to explore that yet. Not enough years left to learn it all. Happy gardening. ♦



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The Vegano Online Mail Store is the easiest way for vegan, vegetarian and other healthy eaters to shop in one hit. Over 180 products are listed, with most being biodegradable and/or organic, and free of harsh chemicals or preservatives. Vegano has been set up by Rebecca Bennett at a farmhouse near Lismore, in response to her frustrations and the expense of having to travel long distances – often visiting four or five outlets – to source items on her shopping list. Ten percent of Vegano's profits will be donated to animal-friendly charities of the customer's choice.

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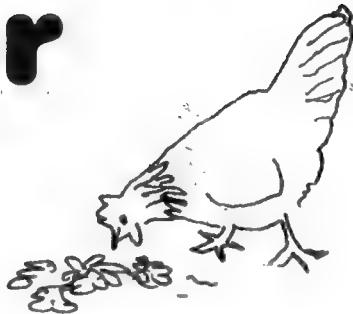
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Herbs For Chooks



by Rosemary Sage, Bethania, Old.

What can we do for our lovable but sometimes under-appreciated chookies? When we think of what they do for us, surely we are moved to pamper them in some small way. After all, they provide us with eggs, meat, feathers and manure. They eat some of the insects and grubs that fly and crawl relentlessly en route to our vegie patches. They entertain us as they go about their days in that busy, enthusiastic manner of theirs. And, let's face it, their chicks are very cute.

One method of payback is to grow some herbs just for them. However, what we want is a continuous supply that is strategically placed in order to prevent a demolition job on the lot. Here are some ideas that you may or may not have come across yet.

If your chooks are kept mainly in a pen, you could plant herbs around the perimeter so that leaves grow through the wire and can be eaten without the whole plant being destroyed. Alternatively, grow them inside the pen but with a cage-like protection. Or, as most people do, develop your herb and vegetable garden elsewhere and add handfuls of chopped herbs to their usual diet.

So what herbs to give them? Many are suitable, however, I will mention just a few and allow you to do further research if the idea appeals. During summer when there is a week or more of excessive heat, chop up some dandelion, rue or wormwood and give these as a pick-me-up. Comfrey too is a beneficial herb, many hens tearing into the leaves despite their hairy surface. To aid in the prevention of worms, garlic, rue and vervain can be added to their meals on a weekly basis. Catnip helps repel rodents. Fortunately, it grows very easily, so grow it generously around the feed shed as well as the sides of the hen house.

I experienced the usefulness of herbs one time when my favourite hen, a very tame Langshan, suffered a bout of fowl pox. She looked so terrible that quite a few people told me to put her down. Now this hen had a habit of getting herself into trouble and yet always displayed good spirit, so I decided I wasn't going to give up so easily. I housed her close to the caravan I was living in at the time and went to work on her several times a day with various lotions and potions. At each sitting I fed her some bread soaked in garlic water,

which she wolfed down. This was followed by three or four gotu kola leaves, parsley and chives. Then I would bathe her face, either with very salty water or a solution of potassium permanganate (Condy's crystals). I'm not ashamed to say that I gave her a lot of attention and cuddles. She responded, and three weeks later you would never have known that she had been so sick.

Maintaining poultry health is just one aspect of the medicinal use of herbs. I believe that the varieties mentioned are also beneficial for ducks and geese. It's encouraging to relate success stories and I'm sure that GR readers would be able to contribute many similar anecdotes to help inspire others not to give up too quickly. 

RASPBERRY JUICE

Next time you have an upset stomach try some raspberry juice. Concentrated raspberry juice can kill the bacteria that causes gastroenteritis, researchers in Wagga have found. Even raspberry cordial with 25 percent juice works well in killing *E.coli*, *salmonella*, *mycobacterium* and *staphylococci*. ☺

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COME-WHAT-MAY

Allergy Diet

by Carol Canton, Slade Point, Qld.

I am of Scottish decent, born in Australia three months after my parents arrived here, so I was brought up on the typical British diet. I could eat anything I liked, and did, except chocolate, which I never liked. I kept eating what I liked till about 10 years ago, when rich fatty foods started disagreeing with me, so I cut out cream, pork and bacon. After that I cut out caffeine, red meat and all dairy from my diet. This was my own choice. About seven years ago I had my first dose of *Candida albicans*. I cleared this up by using Australian Bush Flower Essences and eating garlic. Since then I have had constant outbreaks of thrush.

In February 2001 I went to see a naturopath. I wasn't sick, but I wasn't well either – very tired, lacking in energy, hungry within two hours of eating and generally not my usual self. I was also very stressed at the time. I had a Vega test that confirmed that I had an overload of *Candida albicans* in my system; as well, my blood sugar levels were going up and down like a yo-yo, my hormones were out the window and my digestion couldn't cope. As a result of having food allergies to wheat, barley, rye, oats and dairy products I went on a very strict cleansing diet. This left me with corn and rice as the only grains that I can eat.

In November 2001 I had a really bad dose of flu and went on a course of antibiotics. This upset my system drastically and it took me another six months to get to where I was prior to having had antibiotics. My candida is now under control as long as I stick with the foods that I am able to eat.

My strict diet makes it very difficult to go out to dinner or to a friend's place for a meal. I usually opt for Asian, Chinese or Thai restaurants for dinners out, knowing that they can

cater for my requirements. If I do want to have takeaway food, the choice is fish and chips – grilled fish with no flour. I always ask first and state that I cannot have flour. Occasionally I will have a chicken meal. I have to be careful because the bread stuffing flavour goes into the meat and I can react to that, so I keep it as a treat! As for sweets, about once every six months my treat to myself is to have a piece of baked cheesecake, but I don't eat the crumb base. Because of this diet I don't usually have sweet things at all. I couldn't even have fruit when I was first diagnosed and now have no cravings for sugar or sweets.

I spent a lot of time checking labels, and still do. From studying the lists of ingredients on packets and labels I now know what I can purchase in both canned or packaged food.

This led me to start experimenting with recipes and adapting existing recipes to ingredients that I could eat. I call myself a come-what-may cook because it depends on what is in the fridge and cupboard as to what ingredients I use. I like to use plenty of herbs for flavour, and lots of colour in my food.

RECIPES

Here are some of my adapted recipes; I hope readers will try, and enjoy, them.

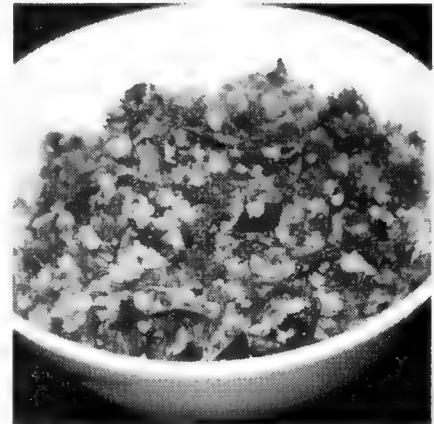
Bean Tomato Dip

1 x 420 g can three or four bean mix, drained

1 x 420 g can crushed tomatoes with basil and oregano

chilli to taste (optional)

Place ingredients in the blender or food processor until mixed. If you like, you can heat and thicken with a small amount of potato flour or cornflour. Eat with plain corn chips or seaweed rice biscuits.



Tabouli

1/2 cup rice crumbs
3 – 4 lge tomatoes
1 – 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1/2 bunch parsley
1/4 cup virgin olive oil
juice of 1 lemon
salt and pepper to taste (optional)

Soak rice crumbs in water, just enough to cover crumbs. Chop tomatoes finely, add garlic. Chop parsley in food processor, add to tomatoes and garlic. Mix in rice crumbs, oil and lemon juice. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve as a salad or an accompaniment to lentil dahl.

Quick Pumpkin Soup

1 onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, chopped or crushed
1 or more tsp curry powder (to taste)
1 tbsp oil
1 medium size Jap pumpkin
1 x 420 g can coconut milk
fresh chopped parsley to decorate
In a saucepan place onion, garlic and curry powder in oil and cook until soft. Cut pumpkin into cubes and put into saucepan with curry mixture. Pour in coconut milk and simmer until pumpkin is cooked. Mash with potato masher. Serve with fresh chopped parsley.

Polenta Pizza

125 g polenta
cayenne pepper or chilli to taste (optional)
500 ml boiling water
 $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup crushed tomatoes with basil and oregano
1 haloumi cheese, grated
1 onion (red or brown), sliced
2 – 3 Roma tomatoes, sliced
olives

Preheat oven to 180° C. Stir polenta and cayenne or chilli into boiling water in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir constantly for five minutes until polenta pulls away from sides of saucepan. Remove from heat and spoon polenta into a canola-sprayed 30-centimetre pie or tart plate. Cover the polenta base with the crushed tomatoes and grated haloumi cheese and place enough onion, tomato and olives to cover the top of cheese. Choose any other toppings that you like to cover the cheese. Bake uncovered for 10 minutes or until cheese is melted. The cayenne or chilli in the polenta gives it a real bite.

Carol's Fried Rice

1 – 2 tbsp canola oil
1 – 2 cloves garlic, finely diced
1 tsp chilli (optional)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ginger or 1 – 2 tsp red/green curry paste
1 med onion, diced
1 – 2 carrots, diced
 $\frac{1}{2}$ – 1 capsicum or $\frac{1}{2}$ red and $\frac{1}{2}$ yellow or green
1 cup frozen peas
1 – 2 cups cooked chicken, cut into bite size pieces (optional)
1 or 2 eggs, beaten (optional)
1 cup jasmine rice or brown rice, cooked

Heat oil in wok, add garlic, chilli, ginger or red/green curry paste and onion and cook until soft. Add carrots and cook until just soft. Add capsicum, cook until soft then add frozen peas. At this stage the optional chicken and eggs can be added and cooked with the vegetables. Stir through the cooked rice and heat through. Serve as a meal or as an accompaniment for the main meal.



Zucchini Slice

4 or 5 zucchinis, depending on size
2 or 3 carrots, depending on size
1 lge onion
 $\frac{1}{2}$ bunch spinach
1 cup flour (gluten free)
1 sml packet grated Parmesan cheese
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil (canola)
5 or 6 eggs, depending on size (medium or large)
salt and pepper
herbs: parsley, shallots, Italian herb mix etc (fresh or dried)
sesame seeds

Heat the oven to 180° C. Grate zucchini and carrot, dice onion, finely chop spinach and add all to a large bowl. Add flour, cheese, oil and well-beaten eggs with salt, pepper and herbs. Mix until all ingredients are combined. Place in a greased (I use spray canola oil) dish, sprinkle with sesame seeds and cook for about 40 minutes. As you can see, I adapt the amounts depending on what ingredients I have, the size of the zucchinis and carrots, or whether I have spinach. You'll see what I mean.

Curried Tuna & Vegetables

1 tbsp canola oil
1 – 2 tsp curry powder
1 – 2 cloves garlic, finely diced
1 onion, diced
1 medium carrot, diced

$\frac{1}{2}$ red capsicum, diced
1 x 185 g can tuna in brine
1 cup frozen peas or snow peas, sliced
1 cup soy or goats' milk
1 – 2 tsp potato flour mixed with a little water or milk

Heat oil in wok, add curry powder, garlic and onion and cook until soft. Add carrot and cook until just soft. Add capsicum and cook until soft. Stir in can of tuna and frozen peas or snow peas. Add milk and simmer for three to four minutes. Mix potato flour with a little water or milk. Add to wok and stir in constantly until mixture thickens. Serve with cooked rice as a meal or as a snack with Corn Thins crackers.

Banana Ice Cream

2 bananas, peeled and frozen
2 tbsp shredded coconut
soy milk

Place frozen bananas and shredded coconut in a food processor with enough milk to mix. Serve over prepared bowls of fresh fruit. Delicious over mangos and passionfruit. ☺



EAT YOUR GREENS

It's no revolutionary idea this, just another piece of research that reinforces a concept that's already pretty well established. Still, it's worth knowing. Apparently, the antioxidants in spinach are great for our brains. Plenty of spinach helps to block the effects of free radicals and should help us remain alert in old age. Free radical accumulation in the brain can lead to degenerative diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. ☺

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Heritage Sheep Breeds

THE ENGLISH LEICESTER

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

Our feature breed this issue, the English Leicester, can justifiably boast a long illustrious history. It has the distinction of being the first sheep breed improved by scientific principles. The rapid changes achieved to its appearance and productivity initiated a move among farmers of identifying important traits and fixing them so they appeared in future generations. The awareness that specially selected animals bred true – like begets like – was the trigger to developing pure breeds.

The eighteenth century in England was a period of agrarian change and improvement and Leicester sheep benefited from this progressive thinking. They had originally been just one of numerous similar long-wooled sheep located in counties as far apart as Kent, Devon and Leicestershire. All were characterised by a heavy large-boned frame and thin carcass. The flesh was coarse grained and fattening took much time and feed.

Robert Bakewell inherited his father's Leicestershire farm in his twenties and with the enthusiasm of youth immediately went about collecting suitable local sheep and cattle to breed and improve. He set out to breed sheep that had a better carcass shape, an increased percentage of meat and fat, less bone and offal and matured and finished faster. Using stock with desirable traits that he had sourced, he closely inbred for a number of generations until he produced an animal that would guarantee a good financial return. Thus the new Leicester was created.

Satisfied, Bakewell initiated the preposterous (for the time) practice of letting or renting out rams. This was not only lucrative – it generated 1000 guineas in 1776 alone – but allowed a controlled dispersion of his genetic pool. The new Leicester was infused into almost every breed of sheep in



English Leicester ewes ready for joining in north-east Victoria. Photo: E Stephenson.

England over the next 150 years and was introduced into Australia via Tasmania in 1826. Even George Washington in America kept a flock of the new Leicesters.

In Australia, and more specifically Tasmania, Leicesters were used to improve the Merino. Many early Merino breeders kept Leicesters and they were used to increase frame size and produce a longer stapled wool. A high percentage of the foundation stock sourced from Tasmania to set up breeding operations in Victoria, SA and WA had benefited from the Leicester legacy. Pure Leicester also contributed to the make-up of the highly successful Border Leicester, so has very much earned the right to be classed a heritage breed.

Although a rare breed, the Australian Flock Register has 19 studs listed, which is encouraging, breeders producing between 20 and 70 lambs each in 2001. The breed is fortunate too that Ethel Stephenson is a devoted supporter. GR featured a story on Ethel and her sheep in No 111, and she was

on the cover of No 151 with one of her beloved Leicesters. The breed is known as the Leicester Longwool in the UK and USA and English Leicester in Australia and New Zealand.

BREED PROFILE

The English Leicester is a large-framed sheep with a long deep body, and a wedge-shaped head free of horns, but with a forelock growing from the poll. The face is clean, with dark lips and

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nostrils, and hooves are dark. The Leicester appears a robust stylish-looking sheep, its dense, long, curly fleece attracting attention, particularly when animals are in full wool.

Temperament

Both sexes are quiet and the rams are nonaggressive. They are easiest managed with regular attention; even the quietest sheep will become wild if it isn't handled regularly. Some stud keepers, like Ethel Stephenson, are diminutive and feminine and manage flocks on their own, which says a lot for the breed's disposition.

Recommended Environment

Leicesters thrive in wet conditions, not surprising as they hail from an area in the UK that is exposed to arctic conditions in winter but becomes almost droughtlike in summer when grass dries off because the soil doesn't hold moisture. They are best suited to cold wet conditions but adapt to hot dry summers as experienced in much of Victoria. Most studs are in Victoria and Tasmania, but keep in mind the breed's ability to adjust and survive. If kept with prime lamb production in mind, then higher rainfall areas will produce the pasture that will enable the breed to fully maximise its ability to grow quickly.

Small farms are ideal for Leicesters – they're suitable for grazing in and around home orchards and for keeping grass down around sheds. Wethers are often sought and used as lawn mowers because of their temperament and the attraction of a lovely fleece to spin.

Fibre Character

'Stunning' best sums up the Leicester fleece. The breed is renowned for the heavy cutting, long-stapled (up to 250 millimetres) curly fleece. It's not quite



The wool can be used in a range of handcrafts including dolls' wigs. Photo: M Kingman.

as long nor as inclined to dreadlocks as the Teeswater or Wenslydale, two breeds handspinners seek but which are not in this country. The fleece has no equal for length, is stylish in character, and has soft handle and dye acceptance, and a noticeably high lustre. The latter is a feature of strong-wool breeds and refers to the shiny surface that results from the reflective properties of the outer scales of wool fibres.

Lustre is a trait that is passed on to Leicester offspring even when crossbred. Young sheep produce very lustrous wool that is not dissimilar to mohair.

Carcass Production

Leicesters produce meat as well as wool and, with their quiet temperament and ability to readily convert pasture into body weight, they're good doers and put flesh on quickly. Lambs are lean and grow well.

Rams have traditionally been valued as a crossing sire to produce prime lamb mothers, or to produce crossbred lambs that mature reasonably quickly but are thrifty and hardy if they have to be held over.

Breeding

This is a fertile breed with a lambing average of 150 percent, so twins are not uncommon and triplets are occasionally produced. The feed available at the time of joining will be reflected in the lamb drop; the better the nutrition, the higher the lambing percentage.

Ewes are quiet caring mothers with

plenty of milk, resulting in high birth survival rates. Most ewes can be easily persuaded to foster orphan lambs with minimum fuss.

Special Features

Although a large-framed sheep, English Leicesters are quiet natured and easy to manage, so they're well suited to new farmers. They're also hardy, adaptable to a range of management systems and produce a lean carcass and attractive fleece for handspinning.

Association Viewpoint

The breed association highlights the fact they're a sound-footed sheep suitable to most districts of Australia, whether it be flat, hilly or, more especially, marginal country. It also points out that the broad square muzzle enables a large bite of grass to be taken, a valuable attribute for both wool and carcass production.

It calls attention to the versatility of the fleece, emphasising the suitability of finer wools for lace knitting and stronger wools for rugs and outer garment knitting and crochet, while soiled wool makes good garden mulch. It also stresses the historic importance of the breed and its genetic traits and the need for preservation.

If you want to know more about English Leicesters phone the secretary Mrs Margaret Kingman 03-5942-8367 or fax 03-5942-8592, or consult the association's website: www.ballaratweb.net/etaa/



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MAKE YOUR OWN PAPER

Learning The Basics

by Sue Southwood, Balmoral Village, NSW.

'Recycling' must be the buzz word for our age – everyone is into it! Most craft markets have numerous stalls where furniture, toys and even clothes have been produced from recycled materials. Most of us are trying to make a creative effort towards a more sustainable lifestyle.

My own efforts are chiefly directed towards the reuse of any papers that come my way. Paper has a quality and character of its own, as any artist or craftsman will vouch for, and, being a bit of a bowerbird, I collect all sorts. Most of the cheap poorer quality paper gets its second wind by becoming useful as mulch, or for wrapping other rubbish in. But all the envelopes, form letters, old cards, wrapping paper, even coloured serviettes, get sorted into piles, awaiting their turn to be processed into unique and lovely papers. As an artist, I get through heaps of drawing paper, including some handmade, and this all goes into the vat if it does not turn out as I envisioned. As well as using my papers for writing on, and making beautiful cards, boxes, books and other stuff, I now make special papers to use in my artworks.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Before beginning to make paper you need to organise an area and gather equipment. Arrange the following:

- Access to water, a water-resistant work area and waste paper.
- A blender, beating stick or mallet and board.
- Plastic buckets, bowls, and a measuring jug.
- Mould and deckle, and a large vat or tub that it will fit inside.
- Couching cloths – an old sheet torn into suitable sizes, tea towels, or other cotton, sewn around edges to prevent frayed ends from marking your new paper.
- A large plastic tray with a piece



Above: Sue Southwood's grandson Nathon stirring the pulp – all ages can enjoy paper making.

Below: Nathon's excitement at seeing the process in action in the mould and deckle.



of foam cut to fit – this will save a lot of mess.

- A press – two solid waterproofed boards and thick pieces of blanket, G-clamps, a jack or a pile of bricks.
- Some nylon mesh, a colander or a sieve.

Next, sort out your recycled pile into types/colours in separate piles. Remove all sticky bits, labels, stamps, plastic and metals. Tear into small pieces, about two centimetres square, and soak in a bucket of hot water for a few hours, overnight maybe. This sodden mass is now ready to beat to a pulp worthy of re-forming into a characterful new sheet of paper. There are a number of ways of doing this: beat it with a stout stick in a bucket, with a mallet on a heavy board, with a paint stirrer or with an ordinary kitchen blender. The latter is probably the easiest method for a beginner.

At this stage you need a bucket of clean water, an empty bucket and a sieve. Ensure that your blender is not splashed with water in the process by loosely wrapping a towel around the motor. Use only a small handful of drained soaked paper to about a litre of water at a time, and blend only for 10 to 20 seconds. Thicker card or paper should be hand-beaten first so that the blender does not overheat. Test the pulp by adding a spoonful to a glass of water – no lumps means it's blended enough. Pour this pulp into a sieve which is resting on a bucket. Repeat until you have completed six blendersful of pulp or the whole bucket is used up.

Now comes the fun part. Set up a large dish (vat) and fill it two-thirds full with water (warm in the winter);



Nathon counts up to 10 while waiting for the pulp to drain.

stir in the blended pulp. This should result in a thin porridge-like consistency. Beside the vat, I have a tray (to catch the drips) with a five-centimetre thick piece of foam on top. This is my couching mound. Nearby, I have a bowl of wet cloths ready to use. Last but not least, my mould and deckle is ready for action.

This piece of equipment should be cherished; your paper quality depends on the condition of your mould and deckle. You can make one easily from a close-grained timber, or use two matching picture frames – both will need to be sealed well with waterproof varnish, and not have any fasteners that may rust, because this will spoil your paper. The top frame becomes the deckle, and the bottom frame is the mould, on which is stretched a mesh surface. I use flywire, or silkscreen mesh, but stainless steel mesh is best. Galvanised staples should be used to attach the mesh. Or you can buy one from art/craft shops. Needless to say, the vat, tray, foam and cloths should all be of a compatible size with the mould and deckle.

Stir your vat of pulp to distribute fibres. Take your mould and deckle (mould with mesh side up, and deckle resting on top), dip it vertically into the vat, level it out and gently lift it horizontally out of the water, giving the whole thing a gentle side-to-side, and to-and-fro shake to knit the fibres while the water is draining through. As

soon as the mould is clear of the water, let it rest for a moment, while you prepare your couching mound. Spread a piece of cloth out on the foam so that there are no wrinkles. (I find the best cloth is cotton, or cotton/linen blend, available from industrial waste sample packs, or use an old sheet.) Now remove the deckle carefully, without dripping water on your new sheet of paper. Take the mould to the couching tray, and sit it at the near edge. Gently 'roll' the mould forward till the paper is on the cloth, press the frame slightly, and keep rolling the frame over on to its other edge. Lift, and there is your brand new sheet of paper!

Cover this with another smoothed-out piece of cloth and form another sheet of paper in the same way, repeating this until you have a stack (post) of 10 or so. If the vat begins to get a bit depleted, add a little more pulp, perhaps after every fourth sheet or so. Smooth a final cloth on the top sheet, and prepare your press.

This can be as simple as two stout waterproof boards, with a dry towel to soak up excess water. Place a towel smoothly on the board; lift your parcel of paper and cloths and place it on the towel. Cover with another towel and the top board. To squeeze out any remaining water, and allow the fibres in the paper to bond more firmly together, you can stand on this for twenty minutes, or use some bricks or G-clamps.

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Nathon carefully removes the deckle . . .



and couches the new sheet of paper onto the prepared mound.

To dry, take the post of paper to an airy spot out of the breeze and sun and separate the cloths with their precious cargo carefully, one at a time. Each sheet of paper will be clinging to a cloth. Either lay it flat, or hang it on a line to dry. It won't fall off! When the paper is completely dry, remove it from the cloth by giving the fabric a gentle tug – the paper should just come off. I usually spray my paper with some gelatine size and dry it again before using it for embossed stamping or any water-based art media. Alternatively, a size made from gelatine, wallpaper paste or starch can be added to the vat with the pulp (about a cup for each

load of pulp). The paper can be ironed flat or stacked in a press for a few days. Have fun!

Dispose of the unwanted pulp thoughtfully – not down the sink! Drain the water through a sieve and then use it on the garden. The resultant pulp can be saved if there is enough of it. Press it into a wad with your hands and allow it to dry. Resoak and blend for a few seconds to use. The pulp can also be frozen. If not dried or frozen, the pulp will start to smell badly, and may even grow mould, so use it quickly. Thoroughly clean all paper-making equipment ready for your next adventure into this exciting craft.

Next time I'll show you some creative tricks to make your paper even more interesting. ☺

EXTRA INFO

An article in GR 129, 'Recycling Your Junk Mail', gave instructions for making a mould and deckle and a paper press. ☺



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The Salt Of The Earth

by John Mount, Woodford, Qld.

Attila the Hun, also known as *Flagellum Dei* (Latin for 'the scourge of God'), while on his way to invade Rome apparently ran out of salt for his troops, so they placed slabs of raw meat under their saddles. The galloping, bouncing weight of rider and saddle pressed the juices from the meat and, after mingling with the salty sweat from the horse, the meat was then considered cured and ready to eat. Could this be the ancient version of the modern takeaway?

Salt is not only one of the oldest known meat preservers, it also has a multitude of other uses. It can be used for basically anything from a gargle for a sore throat to a homemade insecticide. In fact, both ends of the human anatomy can be effectively treated with salt. As previously mentioned, a gargle can be prepared with a half-teaspoon of salt added to a glass of warm water; gurgle or gargle and expel. For piles or

haemorrhoids, add a half-teaspoon of rock salt to one cup of warm water and sponge the affected area. It helps shrink the offending lumps.

For toothache, earache and other aches and pains, make a bag from light calico or some other soft closely woven material. Place only enough salt in it to allow the bag to be pliable. Sew the opening well closed. Finally, heat in a microwave, or in a low preheated oven that has been turned off. Place the bag against the afflicted part. Relief should be felt almost immediately. One of the reasons for the efficacy of this treatment lies in the fact that salt can retain heat for long periods.

For an insecticidal dust, mix bread flour with salt and spread around the vegies. It will act adversely on the moist bodies of slugs, snails, cabbage grubs, and pear and cherry slugs. Caution: earthworms are also susceptible to dusts

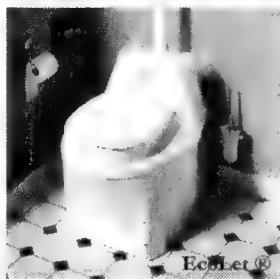
and powders. Another insecticide can be prepared by mixing together 50 grams of soap scraps, 150 grams of salt and ten litres of water. Use as a spray against white cabbage moth. Coarse salt sprinkled in wardrobes and amongst clothing will deter moths and silverfish.

Weeds and grass in unwanted areas can be destroyed by the application of salted boiling water, or just boiling water. For deep-rooted weeds drive a spike into the clump, remove and pour boiling salted water into the hole.

SALTY SOLUTIONS

- Salt mixed with warm water has excellent antiseptic qualities.
- Salt mixed with hot water and poured down the sink hole will banish smells and keep pipes clean.
- The light of a kerosene lamp will burn brighter if a teaspoon of salt is added to the kero. ☺

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Remarkable Stone Method

by Anthony Duncan, Nerang, Qld.

Bookleaf construction is a unique way to create timeless and distinctive stone feature walls, fireplaces or garden structures. If you're handy, and have access to slate, why not give it a try?

Although uncommon in modern architecture, the bookleaf mode of constructing stone feature walls could make a resurgence judging by the interest shown whenever I've used the method. It's slow work, but not too hard to do and the results can be outstanding.

TOOLS

- mason's hammer
- trowel
- small lump hammer
- bolster
- pointing tool
- tape measure
- 1200 mm level
- scrubbing and wire brushes
- firm sponge
- dumpy level

MATERIAL

While any stone can be used – marble, granite, sandstone offcuts and leftovers – slate is most suitable because of its natural low profile. Random slate, however, can still be inconsistent in thickness, so for uniformity purchase slate tiles and whack them into pieces with a hammer and bolster, trying for the longest breaks possible. The tiles are usually 400 square millimetres. Of course, you won't want the 'sawn edge' of the tile exposed, rendering this face unusable. I use the bolster rather adroitly after a little practice, harvesting some nice pieces.



Remember, for economy everything should be used right down to 50 millimetres long, which will surely test your mettle. Four to five square metres of broken tiles will construct one square metre of bookleaf. The wall in the photographs consists of 10,000 pieces, of which I managed to place 500 (two square metres) per day.

METHOD

Foundations

Allow 100 millimetres each side of proposed wall thickness, with a depth of 600 millimetres. Install trench mesh with vertical 12-millimetre steel at 900-millimetre intervals extending to 100 millimetres below the finishing height of your wall.

The two-metre high wall featured has a base of 400 millimetres and a cap of 200 millimetres. To expedite, I had the carpenters knock up a form by cutting the shape from five-ply and bracing, to give the required profile. This form I then bumped along contin-

ually. When we'd almost reached the summit, we would gingerly lift off the form and relocate it to contain the next two metres of wall, setting the heights perfectly with a dumpy. This worked well in a straight line, however, the curve had to be negotiated with raw skill – by hand and eye. The only trick I could rely on here was to measure vertical increments of 500 millimetres, already knowing the width of the wall at that point and maintaining it with vigilance. This kept things honest, though the result is fully dependent on the skill of the aspirant.

Laying Bookleaf

Most bookleaf I have seen shows a very fine mud joint between layers. I think this detracts from the integrity of the structure, so opted for a no-joint mode. This is rather awkward but well worth the effort. I kept the mud (4:1) very sticky and wet, stacking walls both sides simultaneously and backfilling the centre, making sure to vibrate the mud with a pointing tool

Right: These columns are of random-cut sandstone, 70 mm profile. The work was slow, but easy enough – just as well the stone squared naturally on breaking.

into every existing gap. Because pieces vary from 50 – 150 millimetres wide there are many spaces to run wet mud into. Keeping horizontal lines level is vitally important. Even tiles vary from 20 millimetres down to 12 millimetres thick, so grading before you commence laying would help. Also, you invariably encounter thins or slithers from breaking tiles. Collect these and use them to level and balance your structure as you proceed.

The tapered structure aforementioned would be as difficult as one could imagine. If you decided on bookleaf as a feature in your garden or home you would more likely dispense with the taper and choose a 90-degree face, or a slightly tiered single-face wall. For this you would set a form of either removable ply or fixed brick/blockwork, leaving enough exposed footing to accommodate a bookleaf veneer. Walls should be scrubbed with a stiff bristle or wire brush and sponged off.

APPLICATIONS

I have visions of a small bookleaf feature in my current stone residence project. Maybe a low podium to place

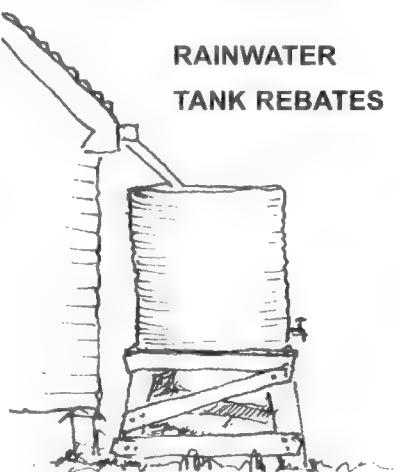


the combustion stove on, or a surround for the old iron bath as a beautiful garden enhancement. Bookleaf is suitable for low garden walls, or one feature wall in your home. Whatever the case, a subtle inclusion of bookleaf can only add to the originality and beauty of your domain.

Anthony is available on a daily rate to help GR stone builders. Contact: Anthony Duncan, PO Box 707, Nerang 4211. Ph: 0412-051-309. ¶



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For more information about Saltgrow readers can contact: Gabbie Cusack on 0427-011-782, or Dr Glenn Dale on 07-3311-1410. ¶

The state government in Victoria and Sydney Water in NSW are both offering incentives, in the form of cash rebates, to purchasers of domestic rainwater tanks. In Victoria, the rebates extend to purchases of some water-saving products. Sydney Water's rebates are from \$150 – \$650, depending on size and installation details of tank, and are available until 30 June 2003. The Victorian scheme offers a rebate of \$150 on rainwater tanks and approved grey-water systems and \$20 (if total purchases are over \$100) on approved water-saving products. This offer is valid until 31 December 2003. Contact your water supplier or tank retailer for details and an application form. ¶

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THE COFFIN BAY PONY

A Struggle To Survive

by Susan Munro, Batchelor, NT.

As I step out of the ute the familiar smell of the sausage sizzle greets me. Sure enough, over on my right are mountains of sausages and steak waiting to be consumed by a variety of onlookers sitting around on hay bales or those intently inspecting the horses up for auction. I am here for the annual Coffin Bay Pony auction at lovely Coffin Bay in South Australia. We are greeted by Rob and Sharon Thomas, local farmers and avid horse enthusiasts, who are assisting at the sale. Rob is a tall, rangy horseman whose eyes shine with enthusiasm as he talks about the ponies. 'I first became interested in the ponies in 1996 when I was looking for available wild horses to work with.' His involvement with the ponies and the ongoing issues became a passion with him and, along with other local horse lovers, he has dedicated a large part of his life to their survival.

Each year the ponies are mustered from Coffin Bay National Park and excess stock are prepared for auction. The selected ponies undergo a TAFE

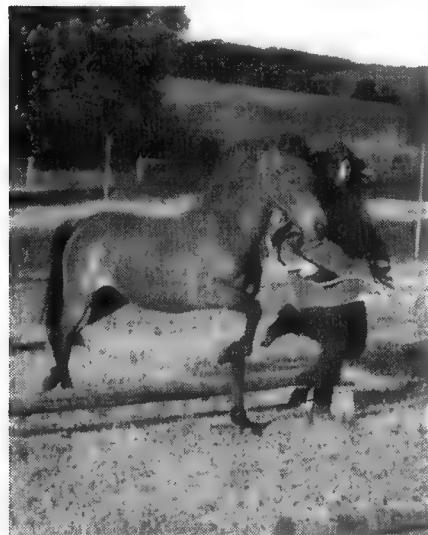


The tough and adaptable Coffin Bay Ponies were valued in the past as harness ponies.

handling course, and are fattened up, wormed and gelded for the auction, which is traditionally held on Easter Sunday.

Standing placidly, totally oblivious to the fact that they are the centre of attention, the fifteen local ponies being held in the portable yards quietly twitch muscles and stamp feet. Seeing them tied to a long line and the side rails it is hard to believe 'They were wild animals two weeks ago,' as Rob announces in his quiet voice.

The first 60 Timor ponies were imported from Sumatra in 1839 and were later crossed with Welsh Cob, Thoroughbred and Arabian stock in upgrading programs. Until the 1930s they were in high demand, being regularly rounded up and sold as riding stock and harness ponies. Their docile nature made them especially suitable for children. These unique little ponies don't need shoeing and are exceptionally strong as a result of their adaptation to an incredibly harsh environment.



Selected ponies are put through their paces in a TAFE handling course.

They are now a recognised breed and all ponies are registered when sold.

Controversy rages over the ponies' presence in the park. They are considered by many to be of heritage value because they are now a distinct breed that has adapted to a specific environment. Others insist there is no place for a feral animal in a national park and that they must be removed. Suggestions have been made to move the herd to land close to Coffin Bay.

A formal management agreement was reached in the early 1990s allowing a herd of 20 mares and one stallion to remain in the park. The ponies' future is still not secure and all efforts should be made to preserve this unique Australian breed.

If you are interested in helping the survivors of this hardy breed, The Coffin Bay Preservation Society can be contacted at Box 1616, Port Lincoln 5606, or www.coffinbaypony.asn.au. The secretary, Rohan Bock, can be reached on 0427-167-154. ♦

Thanks To Mum's Green Thumb

by Jose Robinson, Noosaville, Qld.

My mum wasn't wonderful in the culinary department, but she did have a very green thumb. I guess I have her to thank for my own green thumb, which people keep telling me I have. In my mum's twilight years, before she went to that wonderful big garden in the sky, she used to spend many hours daily tending to her suburban backyard vegetable and fruit garden. She got a great deal of pleasure from it. As a child, I recall being embarrassed by her talent for admiring other people's flower gardens as she walked by, in order to extract a few freebie cuttings from them. Her guile was unsurpassed, except by me a generation later.

I wasn't keen on eating green vegies when I was young, home-grown or otherwise. But I do remember during World War II when food was rationed. I was about nine or ten years old and I actually planted beetroot, carrot and corn in my very own little vegie patch. Of course, I was happy to eat stuff I had planted myself and watched grow; it seemed to taste better somehow.

Aeons later (in my own twilight years) I still get a great deal of pleasure from my present permaculture garden, even though recently I had to gear down in size. If anyone in my family should ask me what I would like for a birthday present, I invariably say 'a load of manure please', or 'anything for the garden . . . and would you like a bag of zucchini?' I



Jose Robinson muses on her family's genetic green thumb, still bringing her pleasure in her twilight years.



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never go out anywhere without spare bags for organic stuff like seaweed, grass clippings and manure. You never know when this sort of thing turns up out of the blue, so I like to be prepared. Recently I scored some wonderful elephant poo from a visiting travelling circus because I just happened to have six empty sacks with me. Wow, is it huge!

My only daughter seems to be following in my footsteps too. Although she is a working wife and mother with a university student son, she finds time to indulge in green thumb activities around her home with astounding results. She even gets enthusiastic about bags of manure. So definitely the genes have it! I've got a lot to thank my mum's green thumb for. ♦

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POULTRY PROJECT

I am thinking of getting some poultry – chooks, geese and some guineas. Do they all run together, or are they better kept separate?

Greg T Cooper.

Mixed species of poultry can be allowed to mix freely outdoors, but are better not all housed together. Waterfowl like to wash and splash in drinking water and moisten bills full of feed, so quickly foul water for the other species. They're best housed separately. Turkeys (pheasants and peafowl also) can pick up a potentially fatal disease – blackhead – from soil that chooks have passed droppings on so generally they're kept separately from chooks. Guineas are hardy and not prone to blackhead, but may exhibit a malicious streak and make life hell for companions from other species, including large turkey toms. Despite these individual differences, all the species you have named can cohabit together if there is sufficient space and a range of shrubs, hedges or fencing for the different groups to get away from each other. Providing cool clean water would be the challenge, the geese being inclined to sample and dirty all the containers provided. As well, care would need to be taken to ensure the turkeys don't get blackhead. Crushed garlic in water at least every three weeks would be necessary and possibly the intermittent use of a proprietary protective product like Emtryl.

PARASITE CONTROL

I purchased my first issue of *Grass Roots* last month, the June/July issue. It's been very helpful and I've referred to it many times since. I particularly thank you for your response to Pamela Seddon on this page and the great information on home flock help. I wish I had heard of chook worming with garlic earlier because I had just wormed them as advised by the vet, but of course I couldn't eat any eggs for 28 days. From now on my girls will be the garlic girls, and be fatter on their new diet. I disinfected all perches in the budgie and chook pen with a dilution of tea tree oil and water. I was also told that Pestene is the same mix of ingredients as common old tomato dust. Is this true? If it is, does that mean I can tom-dust my birds against mites? I do know a lady who has used the tomato dust on her horse which had lice. She swears that it killed them on contact, and it's a cheap alternative. Could I dust my three bobby calves with it for lice?

**Lisa Mullen,
MORIAC 3240.**

We're glad to know GR has helped already and hope you continue to enjoy and learn from the magazine. As you have already read, garlic is a satisfactory alternative to chemical vermicides, but remember also that a thorough clear out of litter and even liming

of yards will support the garlic treatment.

With poultry, perches don't need to be disinfected but it pays to examine the roosting birds at night for the presence of tiny mites. They may be the size of a pinhead and red coloured when engorged with blood. Look at cracks and crevices in woodwork and knots in the perch wood, especially the bottom of the perch, because these are the likely places mites will seek refuge. Apply boiling water, diluted tea tree oil or one of the alternatives mentioned in GR 153 for mites. Lice live on birds and it is these that are treated with sulphur powder or Pestene. You can use vegetable dust, provided it is around 99 percent sulphur and does not have potentially harmful additional ingredients with it. Bulk garden sulphur will be much cheaper to purchase than a product in a medium-sized container. Lice on farm animals may point to a nutritionally unbalanced diet, and a shortfall in the mineral sulphur in particular. By all means dust your bobby calves with sulphur, just a dusting along the backline should be sufficient, but consider supplementing the calves' diets also. Only a small amount is necessary, a teaspoonful on dry feed for a couple of days would help eliminate the lice. If ever in doubt about what can or cannot be used with animals, be guided by what you personally would be prepared to use or ingest, because many domestic animals carry out the dual role of pet as well as food producer. ♦

Poultry Breeders

We're looking for purebred breeders of the different poultry species to list in our next edition of the *Poultry Breeders Directory*.

Send a stamped SAE for an entry form to: **Poultry Directory, PO Box 117, Seymour 3661.**

ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES FOR ANIMALS



\$90 Pet Power Pack First Aid Kit
\$95 with flea, worming & heartworm prevention, plus book.
\$30 only for flea, worming and heartworm energy.

Please contact Jackie Fitzgerald for other products available.

Jackie Fitzgerald: Homoeopath, Herbologist, Reiki Master.
Shop 4, 658 Pittwater Rd, Brookvale NSW 2100, Australia.
Ph: 02-9939-0410 Fax: 02-9939-0404 Mobile: 042-778-8858

ECO NEWS

SOUTHERN BROWN BANDICOOT

There were once six species of bandicoot in South Australia. Now there is one – the southern brown bandicoot and it is listed as nationally endangered and under threat of becoming locally extinct in the Mount Lofty Ranges. An ongoing conservation program in recent years has seen some improvement in the bandicoot's situation, but its endangered status in the Mount Lofty Ranges is exacerbated because that population is quite isolated from other bandicoot populations as a result of habitat fragmentation.

The bandicoots often live in association with humans, feeding in gardens and scavenging in mulch heaps. They are seldom seen, but their presence is betrayed by the characteristic conical-shaped holes they leave in garden beds and exposed soil. Their presence in populated areas puts them at risk of predation by domestic pets. They are also often mistaken for rats or possums, and dealt with accordingly.

Conservation authorities are asking for help from residents of the Adelaide Hills in surveying and monitoring the bandicoot population. In particular, researchers are keen to know more accurate bandicoot numbers and the extent of gene flow throughout the region.

For more information, or to report sightings, Adelaide Hills residents can call: 1300-366-191.

DROUGHT AND BUSHFIRE TOLL

By now we are all too familiar with the dreadful consequences to people and livestock of recent severe drought and bushfires. There are, however, some less obvious impacts. Many native animals, including platypus, are suffering as their water sources dry up and the quality of what remains deteriorates. Platypus numbers have fallen in some areas and it is feared that lack of water could decimate frog populations. Insect-eating fauna are under stress as their food supply diminishes.

Dry conditions are also affecting the viability of moths, weevils and beetles introduced as biological control agents for the rampant environmental weed,



The southern brown bandicoot is making a tentative recovery, but help is needed from Adelaide Hills residents. Photo courtesy of Nature Foundation SA Inc.

bitou bush, setting back control programs in some areas.

Bushfires in Canberra have had devastating effects on rare species captive breeding programs at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Of 35 brush-tail rock wallabies, only three survived. Only one koala was left from a population of 20. The regent honeyeaters were destroyed, and there were only four speckled ducks left of a group of 15.

FARMING UNDER THREAT

The Victorian Catchment Management Council has predicted that about 40 percent of that state's farmland will be unusable by 2050 unless major changes in farming methods occur and land use more closely matches the land's capacity to produce. Land degradation could make farming so unviable that up to 55 percent of farmers could leave the land. The Federal Government is considering proposals to financially assist farmers who move away from growing high-water-usage crops such as rice and cotton. The council has recommended that a future income to farmers should come from the provision of environmental services. This would see farmers being paid to undertake environmental management systems and protect remnant vegetation. A state-funded trial scheme where farmers enter contracts

with the government to protect remnant vegetation is already under way in some areas.

FROG HOSPITAL

Many of the frogs brought in to the Cairns Frog Hospital in recent months have shown symptoms of mucor (*Mucor amphibiorum*), a fungal disease known to cause fatalities in frogs, toads and platypus. According to a recent newsletter of the Western Australian Museum, symptoms can include lethargy, skin sloughing, weight loss, breathing difficulties, ulcers, dermatitis and holes in the tympanic membrane (in the ear) of frogs. Frogs appear to be more susceptible to the disease when they are stressed as a result of other unfavourable habitat or climatic factors and symptoms can vary between species. Mucor is airborne, but can survive in contaminated water; it prefers sandy soil and is drought tolerant, unlike chytrid, another fungal disease affecting frogs. It also appears to prefer soil fertilised with manufactured fertilisers over those where natural manures have been used.

Infected frogs at the hospital have been successfully treated with an anti-fungal containing formaldehyde. To help prevent the spread of diseases it is important not to translocate frogs from one area to another, especially interstate. ♀

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Megg & GR Readers,

My husband and I gave birth to a beautiful pink, healthy baby girl (4.3 kg) on Boxing Day 1999. Three days later I could not breast-feed her, she was admitted into a humidicrib, **ALLERGIC TO MY MILK**. Her allergy list is: cold water and foods, wheat, dairy, sugar, lotions, cleaning agents, fragrances, grain-fed meat, poultry, bananas, Western medicine, vaccinations, alcohol, trees, pollen, grass (only in spring). She is only three so we are still adding to that list. She convulsed every two or three days due to buildup of toxins from air and food, resulting in blackness under her eyes and exhaustion of her organs. We had been turned away by Western doctors and alternative specialists.

We were self-employed in a small town, but we closed our life-goal business to take care of her, cooking special meals and cleaning the house three times a day. Our social life was nil as friends and family may have used products she was allergic to, such as carpet sprinkle, disinfectant, or maybe perfume, or they might have plants in the garden she might react to. I have since had a breakdown due to being closed out by family, friends and professional persons. My husband had also given up his business to assist because keeping chooks and growing vegies and cooking daily was too much for me, plus the daily activities for our little miss Stevie-leigh.

My husband then suggested I connect to the Internet for some stress relief and to regain my sanity from isolation. I chose to email 13 Chinese herbalists from the list. Meanwhile, Stevie-leigh had four convulsions in five days. It was getting extreme. Two days later our saviour was on our mail list – a wonderful lady in Camp Hill, Brisbane, who told us about Alba Therapies. Stevie-leigh has not convulsed in 50 days (at time of writing). She has regained her pinkness, has no blackness under her eyes, can now play all day and is wanting and eager to learn.

Thanks to Roselba, one amazing lady in her knowledge of her profession, our little Stevie-leigh can be like all other kiddies. Stevie-leigh will major in other things though, grows her own vegies and chooks, gets excited when we enter a fruit shop and not the lolly aisle, makes shampoo, conditioner, lipstick etc. I want our story to be heard so other parents do not have to go through the heartache of seeing their children ill from foods etc. Without help, isolation in this area is very disturbing. Stevie-leigh is now making a book, with our help, soon to be published. It includes recipes, household tips, craft ideas, and is called *Stevie-leigh's Alternative Recipes*.

We have now moved and are attempting to lease land from the council to cultivate for her. Please write to us via a dear friend's post box as we would love to help you. Anyone with suggestions or seeds to help, Stevie-leigh would appreciate it. We can now endeavour to expand our family. Well readers, we had it all, but we have learnt in this busy world - health before wealth. Stevie-leigh would love a little penpal.

Stevie-leigh, Selena & Steve,
C/- PO Box 536, WATERFORD 4133.

Dear Readers,

I am searching for information on the source of seed, germination and **GROWING OF RICE**, especially the dryland variety. Also seeking potato seed. Yes, I know you use seed potatoes normally, but I need actual seed, from any variety of potato! Last, but by no means least, I am seeking either the source of, or traditional, open-pollinated seed from, the following: grains (including wheat), ancient food plants/survival crops, perennial vegetables and tropical food plants. I'm happy to **PURCHASE OR EXCHANGE SEED** and any information on the above will be welcomed.

Penny,
PO Box 508, MARYBOROUGH 4650.

Hi GR,

I've been an enthusiastic reader since 1987 and reckon it has to be the best magazine ever, with the most help and information. I'm now hoping someone can help me. I have a skin condition called **VITILLIGO**, which, although not painful, is really disfiguring. The pigment disappears in patches, and I have it all over the backs of my hands, going up my arms, and now it's starting on my feet. Apparently the whole body can be affected, and it looks horrible! Conventional medicine doesn't offer any help. I was told by someone about selenium, but not how much, how often or anything. I spend a lot of time in my garden, so have to be careful the 'bald' patches don't get sunburnt. I really hope somebody knows something about this condition and can help me.

Julie Lewis,
13 Parton Close, BUFF POINT 2262.

Dear GR Friends,

I have a few requests I hope someone can help me with. The first is about **NATIVE STINGLESS BEES**. My husband, Mark, is very interested and would like any information and to know where to buy some around our way (Hunter Valley). Secondly, I wonder if anyone has any time to write and tell me about various **AREAS IN VICTORIA** to visit and possibly **RELOCATE** to in a few years time. We are hoping to spend a few weeks travelling around Victoria and southern NSW next year and would appreciate a guiding hand in the right direction. Local knowledge is always invaluable.

Julie Johnson,
6 Wallsend St, STANFORD MERTHYN 2327.

Dear GR Readers,

Hi! I have been a GR reader for some years now and purchase it locally when we go to town. I notice everybody seems to have success in Feedback and I am looking for a **SCYTHE**, the grim reaper type. Does anyone know if or where I might be able to purchase one? Please help as we would like to be able to use it in the orchard because brushcutters make a mess, are hard to start and costly to run. Love to hear from anyone.

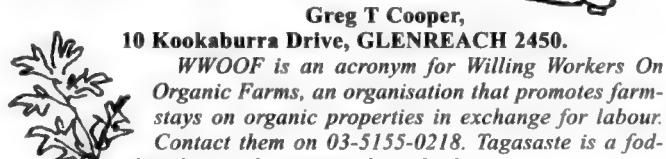
Kate Travers,
PO Box 749, YEPPOON 4703.

Dear Megg & Mary,

Just a few questions: What are **WWOOFERS**? What is tagasaste and wormwood?

Greg T Cooper,

10 Kookaburra Drive, GLENREACH 2450.

WWOOF is an acronym for Willing Workers On Organic Farms, an organisation that promotes farm-stays on organic properties in exchange for labour. Contact them on 03-5155-0218. Tagasaste is a fodder plant and wormwood is a herb.

Dear GR & Readers,

I thought I would write a quick note to let you all know about a great natural cleaning product I have come across and have been using. It's called Nutri-Clean OLC All Purpose. It's an organic liquid concentrate distributed by Nutrimetics. It's derived from a desert cactus, yucca, and has no colour, fragrance, chemicals, bleaches etc in it. Mix 30 millimetres to 5 litres of water and it goes a long way! Use for dishes, benches, stoves, laundry, pets, rugs, upholstery, woodwork, car etc. It would probably be great for those people sensitive to smells and chemicals. Can also wash delicate items like woollens, lingerie and baby clothes safely.

Jodie,
BOAT HARBOUR.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Grass Roots,

Thank you for such an informative and helpful magazine. We moved into our piece of paradise at Easter 2002. It's a lovely old home on a double block. It is in town, but it's on the river bank so we can still escape. However, our block does not have much vegetation (bar some fruit trees down close to the river) and this, along with various floods, hasn't helped the erosion of the river bank. There is a nice gully running straight down the middle of it. We are trying to figure out the best, cheapest, most environmentally friendly way to fill up the hole and give ourselves a lovely backyard as well as good access to the river. Usually we just sit and stare at it and don't know where to start. I know that there must be many like-minded, more resourceful people out there who can help us. We would welcome any advice from people who have had a similar experience.

Margaret Borger & Adrian Collins,
90 River St, KEMPSEY 2440.

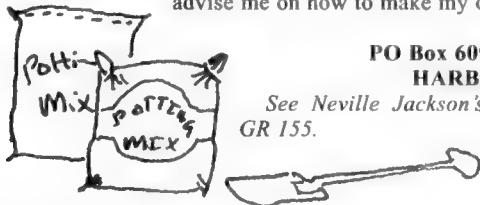
Dear Editor,

Many publications receive requests from people trying to find **LONG-LOST FRIENDS OR FAMILY MEMBERS**. One way you can help them is to suggest they try FriendsReunited <http://www.friendsreunited.com.au/> The website was initially designed to help people catch up with their old schoolmates, but many have used it to find parents, children, adopted children. Some have refound their true loves from anything up to 50 years ago and married them at last. FriendsReunited now has eight million members worldwide with sites for eight countries. If any journalists want to visit the site, we are always happy to arrange free membership.

Eddie Castellan,
FriendsReunited Australia,
<http://www.friendsreunited.com.au/>

Dear GR Readers,

I grow most of my plants in pots and I am fed up with buying **POTTING MIXES** which are usually poor quality. Can anyone advise me on how to make my own?



CJ,
PO Box 6099, COFFS
HARBOUR 2450.

See Neville Jackson's article in
GR 155.

Dear GR Readers,

This is my first letter to you! I have read most of your mags in the last 10 years, but now I thought it was time to put in some of my information to help people in need. For **ARTHRITIS SUFFERERS**: I know there are many kinds, but I have read a few books and they all agree that it is caused by an accumulation of uric acid for which carrot and apple juice is very helpful. A friend of mine had it in her ankle for years and could not go for walks, just limp around in the house. Her husband got the idea from somewhere to boil one bottle of apple cider vinegar with two teaspoons of cayenne pepper for 10 minutes. Let cool and wet a bandage in it and wrap it around the painful area. Repeat after two hours. It burns a bit, but my friend got rid of the arthritis in one go. Read some books or ask a health practitioner about the diet.

Regarding **CANCER**, I will not dare to give any advice, but there is a video available from the USA. Dr Lorraine Day, a medical doctor, was teaching other doctors at university for 15 years, then developed a cancer the size of a big grapefruit just above the left breast. She refused a mastectomy and tried 40 different methods to get rid of it, which she eventually did, and is fine and

healthy. Now she tells step by step what she did. The video is called *Cancer Does Not Scare Me Anymore*. It's available from: E & E Phillips, 'Willow Bank', Four Mile Creek Rd, Four Mile Creek, NSW 2800. I think they are \$42 because of conversion of US to Australian dollars. Ask for the update as there are two by the same name, the second one with much more information and photos of the cancer.

A good remedy I found in a very old mag (don't know the name of it as I had only two pages) is a **PAIN LINIMENT** consisting of one litre alcohol (I used methylated spirits), 30 grams myrrh, 15 grams goldenseal and 7 grams ground cayenne pepper. I twisted my knee some time ago and could not even stand on it, let alone walk, but I had to go to town urgently and I live on my own. Fortunately, I had this liniment already made up. I just rubbed it with my hand on the painful knee. In about 15 minutes the pain was gone and never came back. I thought this might be useful for somebody because when I die nobody will know about it.

Now to my own problems re **TERMITES**. I have them in my firewood in the shed about 20 metres from the house. I asked somebody for advice and they told me to ring the Department of Timber and Forestry in Brisbane, which I did. A gentleman told me to pour brown vinegar on them, which I did and it helped. But, as soon as a new load of wood comes in they are in it again. I looked up all your magazines for information, but none seems to be helpful except a mention of using arsenic, which I don't know where to buy. Anybody know?

SLATERS have taken over my garden and eat holes in potatoes, carrots and tomatoes so big I can poke my finger through. Usually they are still in that hole. Really would appreciate some help.



For **RESTLESS LEG SYNDROME** I read about a new kind of treatment called Lastone therapy. The practitioner puts warm stones on the patient and also massages with stones and hands. It's called a stress and tension illness. There is a book, *Prescription for Nutritional Healing*, by James Balch, which has some good advice and vitamins and minerals to take for it (available at larger bookshops).

I have a wool carding machine, hand-operated, for sale, but it's pretty heavy.

Thank you for such valuable and practical magazines. My daughters and I made the move out of Melbourne 19 years ago and are almost self-sufficient, and happy.

Henrietta,

PO Box 109, THE SUMMIT 4377.

Dear Grass Roots,

I am a single 56-year-old pensioner living in the Hunter Valley **NEAR MAITLAND**, NSW. I rent a duplex with a small backyard, roughly nine metres square, which is currently a paradise of weeds and bindii. It also receives mostly winter shade and summer sun. I would like to turn it into a productive vegetable garden, but with very limited resources or gardening knowledge I am at a loss to know where to begin – although I do have a tiny herb garden. I would like to meet some local Hunter Valley people face to face who wouldn't mind giving practical advice, constructive criticism and friendship.

Marie-Louise Yates,
1/6 Baker Drv, TENAMBIT 2323.
Ph: 02-4934-6407.

Contributors and correspondents who want letters or articles returned are requested to include correct postage.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR,

Many readers write in asking **QUESTIONS** that can easily be answered by a phone call to their local Department of Agriculture office. NSW Agriculture has a publications catalogue available from: NSW Agriculture, Locked Bag 21, Orange NSW 2800. Telephone orders ring: 1800-028-374. Website information, news, media and bookshop: www.agric.nsw.gov.au To order: bookshop@agric.nsw.gov.au Fax: 1800-642-065.

The information available is huge. The list of publications is huge. This is just NSW. Other states have their information centres and I suppose there is a federal one. And if that's not enough, every country in the world will have one somewhere.

Books, Ag Facts, Agnotes are all quickly available. Then there is the ABC TV 'Landline' series with all its information. Don't forget all the Ag Dept field officers who talk to them. It's all there, much of it free.

Sometimes it's hard to identify very small bugs such as the baby grass ticks which, although about the size of a pinhead, inflict a bite that stings for weeks and raises a very itchy lump. If you place the insect on a small mirror it is easily seen (in double). You not only see the real image, but the image that is the other side of the insect.

I needed a scribe for marking items such as metal sheet before cutting them to the final shapes. Prices ranged from \$32.77 to \$4.99. All were made in China, all looked more or less identical. It really is ludicrous that there could be a 600 percent difference. Why?

It's nice to know that people are working towards a more sustainable future, for example, with solar power. Pyramid Hill, a very small town in Victoria, has had much success and publicity about its scientific approaches to age-old problems. They are making solar power from highly saline solar ponds. The solar ponds are producing heat to help 'dry' the salty water so that by evaporation table salt is produced.

I hope they catch the pure water from the evaporation for the town's water supply too. They think that in the near future they will be able to put electricity back into the grid. I'm pleased that some good has come of the awful salinity problem, and that the people who have worked hard have had such a good result. I take my hat off to them. Other states of Australia such as WA could follow suit.

In GR 153 Nevin Sweeney shared his 12-volt experiences and practical knowledge, over 15 years, of an actual installation. This is unique in all the write-ups of solar systems that I've read.

Some interesting products are emerging in the 'caravan and motorhome' and 'on the road' magazines. Piranha Distributors have a 16-page 'Dual Battery Management Systems' catalogue free, phone 03-9762-1200. All the things you need for self-sufficiency are also required for caravans, yachts etc.

A sensible bloke in this area bought a hilly piece of bushland that had been prospected for gold in the late 1800s and had numerous tunnels leading into the hills. He has parked his caravan in one of these and his car in another. Add solar panels and a mobile phone and bingo, he is all organised very quickly and cheaply. What a practical solution to the 21st century's mayhem and chaos. Being resourceful pays. A porta-potti don't cost a lottery, so there's your sanitation drama solved.

Things have moved pretty rapidly in 15 years since I moved far out from 'de smoke'. Dome antennas claim to drag in obstinate TV signals in problem areas. TAFE Qld runs The Renewable Energy Centre and certificate courses, phone 13-12-48, or fax 07-3259-9075; Envirotek has free seminars, phone 02-9439-4566, fax 02-9439-4599. There are probably similar courses in other states. ReNew magazine has all sorts of DIY solar projects, from a radio using a cardboard box aerial to solar cookers, phone 03-9388-9311.

Many letters are asking for help in one way or another and now

there is a helpline for people, called Life Activities, phone 1300-783-283 for the cost of a local call. As the name suggests, it gives advice on things such as **WHERE TO GO TO GET ADVICE**. There are so many government-financed agencies that we know nothing about.

Many Australians love to travel whether it be in Oz or OS (overseas). I'm one of those people with a yonder yearning and have done my fair share. One important rule I've learnt is to **TRAVEL LIGHT**. Too often you see people like packhorses with goodness knows what. Why? I travelled all over Europe and the Mediterranean for six months with only a small kit bag half a metre long, which rates as cabin luggage in aeroplanes, coaches and so on. No hold-ups waiting for your huge backpacks or suitcases. A backpack is preferable to a huge suitcase of course. A girl I knew in Paris got so fed up with her two big suitcases that she abandoned them on the Champs Elysées and, four hours later, returned to find them still there untouched. You couldn't do that now.

Travelling by car in Australia the same rule applies. You need even less here than overseas. Just jump in the car and go now. Friends have just bought a four-wheel drive, a 700-kilogram slide-on camper, slide-out kitchen, shower, toilet for \$28,000, plus the 4x4 at \$38,000, plus incidentals for \$7000. They said it was not their first choice as they couldn't afford the \$90,000 second-hand motor home they would really have liked. I just don't understand any of this I'm afraid, because I think that every extra is an extra handicap. They think I'm eccentric, but then I think that they are. My vehicle goes twice as far on a litre of fuel than theirs, so in that respect I can spend more on other things like nice food cooked by someone who actually knows what they are doing, using ingredients that haven't gone off in some dodgy icebox. I'm sure I'll have a good night's sleep in my station wagon rather than on a kitchenette's seats. To each his own I suppose.



A place to sleep is the least of your worries with our climate and a good swag. Even in Greece, where everything is booked out in summer, I slept on the beach or in the many donkey folds. I found the straw lovely and cool and comfortable, unlike the hot stuffy dormitories with lumpy beds in some of the tourist hostels. No recalcitrant snorers either, only me who gave the donkeys good reason to go to the furthest corner of their paddock to escape me. It was a lovely primitive feeling sleeping on the straw, something that humans no doubt did for thousands of years. Reminds me, I must get some straw for the garage floor to have a week's holiday at home sometime, a change is as good as a holiday. Old words but wise. Eccentric? Naaah, just happy with little.

Roberino,
PO Box 359, WOOLGOOLGA 2456.

Dear GR People,

Has anybody gone through the process of **HOUSE REMOVAL** onto their own property? I would like to know absolutely everything about this process, such as: price of removal of the house, what truck company was used, how much it cost, did you shop around for prices, could you list the companies used, was this option cheaper in the long run than building your own property, any pitfalls, does the council have a role in any way with this? I would welcome any information no matter how small. I thank you in advance.

Michelle Hunter,
8/26 Normanby Ave, THORNBURY 3071.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR,

Accepted wisdom states you either learn from history or you are doomed to keep making the same mistakes over and over again.

The dust bowl conditions of some American states during the 1930s, due to a prolonged drought, forced a whole generation of settlers to simply walk away. The topsoil had blown away, leaving scorched earth. Victoria witnessed its topsoil blow across the Tasman to New Zealand during the 1950s (or was that the 1960s?) and now, 50 years later, NSW and Qld are watching much of their agricultural soil blow away during the current drought.

It takes centuries for nature to create a few centimetres of top-soil and it can all blow away in hours. We have wrought a stunning catalogue of **ECOLOGICAL DEVASTATION** over a historically short time. Far too much land clearing has been allowed to occur, with much of our native vegetation lost to agriculture for a comparatively small population.

No one is more aware than I that Australia is not like Europe, nevertheless, there are surely lessons to be learnt. Europe's farmland has been carefully nurtured over the centuries, shelter belts of trees prevented soil erosion and loss. Britain's stone walls, hedgerows and copses did much the same, only better. The hedgerows provided habitat for all manner of wildlife, the ditches drained the land carefully and also provided a living for frogs, toads, eels and various water organisms. Liberal quantities of spring manure gave a livelihood to earthworms and soil organisms. This kept the land fertile for over 800 years. Surely there is a lesson in all this *somewhere*. In 200 years we seem to have learnt little in sustainable land management. We have brought European farming methods without European soil conservation methods, a sure recipe for what we face today, erosion, salination, loss of tree cover and topsoil blown away and lost forever. The loss of so much tree cover has been devastating for our wildlife, putting many species close to extinction and others under severe stress.

The Business Council is calling for more migrants, up to 50 million. When one considers what just 19 million have done to the environment it beggars the imagination to think what such a figure would bring. Hopefully, common sense will prevail before too long, although, as history has shown us many times, common sense is not all that common.

Alan Stewart,

12 Weymouth Plc, ALEXANDRA HILLS 4161.

Dear GR Folk,

I've been reading your magazine with a combination of awe and amazement for several years now. We live at a time in history when nature is held in contempt. Earth herself is in danger from humanity. I feel that your quiet and gentle revolution could well be part of our solution, though it may take a very long time. So, thank you for *Grass Roots*. I'm a 45-year-old man and have frittered away my life by not living how I wanted and following my dreams. It's taken divorce, the loss of my children, my business and my health to **GET SOME PERSPECTIVE** on things. It's beautiful here in SA, but it's not where my heart lies. I miss the forest, the mountains and the blue ocean of Qld and northern NSW. I don't think I'll ever have the money again to buy something on my own (as if we ever truly 'own' anything). So if anyone could use some help now and then to grow and develop their little piece of paradise, I'd love to help. I'm good company, travelled, educated, open and honestly interested in other people and their journey. We can be so isolated in this Great Mystery, Life, and yet we all share it. Strange, huh? If you'd like to write, or whatever, please drop me and my cat Porridge a line!

Joseph,

1/54 Agnes St, CLARE 5453.
Ph: 08-8842-4220.

Dear GRs,

In addition to Dan McSweeney's method of **PEST-FREE STORAGE**: flours and grains can be placed into the freezer for a couple of days to kill off pests. I use airtight 500-gram coffee tins (after coffee is all used), which cost nothing and can be cheaply labelled and decorated with whatever nail polish you might have around.



Regarding Lorraine Costanzo's mention of dogs becoming sick or dying after eating raw eggs: I think eggs are pretty safe if cooked. I do know that some doctors warn against the consumption of raw eggs in the human diet because of the possibility of bacterial contamination. I often cook up our excess or dirty eggs for our dog, with no ill effects so far.

The 'Long-Drop Dunnies' story in issue 153 was much appreciated and resulted in quite a few giggles at this end.

Last summer I grew some ROSELLA PLANTS

and made a few jars of tangy and uniquely flavoured jam that was quickly devoured by the family. I urge readers who haven't grown them to give them a go. They need the same conditions as tomatoes but are very heat and drought tolerant. They have attractive yellow, hibiscus-like flowers and are suitable for the ornamental or front garden as well as the vegie patch. If readers would like the recipe for making the jam send a stamped addressed envelope to the address below.

I was flabbergasted to read in a local paper that the average water consumption, per head, was 346 litres *per day*. We are on tank water and only use about 50 – 60 litres per person, per day. If we used 346 litres each, per day, our two 5000 gallon (22,730 lt) tanks would be empty in less than a month! Something to chew over isn't it? Having to live on tank water is an education, but we don't feel any hardship because of it.

Tara Hoy,

78 Upper Smiths Creek Rd, KUNDABUNG 2441.

Dear Megg & Staff,

GR 154 to hand yesterday, so lots of interesting reading over the next few days. I was interested in Roberino's letter when he wonders what makes people **HOARDERS OR TOSSENS**. I was in my teens when World War II started, and with it came rationing. After a while, it was impossible to buy a china cup or anything in the way of kitchenware, or even good clothing, and then we had to give coupons for everything. I can remember Mother making me an evening dress out of curtain net, which for some reason was not rationed. Before the war, the country was in the grip of the Great Depression, so people of my parents' generation knew all about making do and recycling. Even today, I feel guilty about throwing something away. I hope that answers Roberino's question about hoarding. It makes me cringe when I see the wastefulness of some people today and their 'She'll be right' attitude.

Still love the magazine and I have some very nice penpals from its pages.

Barbara Jenkins,
1/19 Barnett Cres, BRIDPORT 7262.

Please keep letters brief, clearly written and relevant to self-sufficiency topics. Letters pushing barrows (religious, political or other) will not be published.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Hi Megg, Mary & all at GR,

As you can see by the address, there have been big changes!

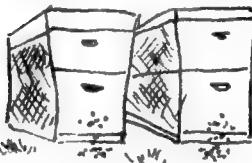
It has taken a lot of mulling over, deep thinking and much, much more! While we've been happy in the two years we've spent on the 2½ acres at Pomona, earlier this year we came to the decision (after a couple of minor health scares) that at our age we have to be sensible and **REALISE OUR LIMITATIONS**. Now that we have entered our 70s we can't work as hard or as long as we used to, and Don doesn't need all that Whipper Snipping exercise that he's been doing for the last two years. Though we initially thought that we'd live on our new mountain top till we were carted off in a box, we decided to opt for one of the lovely new retirement estates in the Noosa area on the Sunshine Coast (with area available for a good size garden). Once the ball began rolling, it happened so quickly! To cut a long story short, here we are, all sold up, and back to living near the beach once more, and loving it!

There have been some major adjustments in our lives; mainly that my extensive permaculture gardens and my 'just now' bearing very well orchard have been left behind for someone else to reap the benefits. Our buyers came from Sydney and absolutely fell in love with the place on first sighting on the Internet. We sold at a good profit, and this enabled us to buy into one of the very lovely areas on the Sunshine Coast for our twilight years.

It really is a beautiful place. The unit is quite large, with three bedrooms and an open plan similar to the one we designed for the mountain. There is sufficient space for my vegie gardens and I've already planted out 12 dwarf fruit trees. I feel we are going to be very happy here, even though our self-sufficient lifestyle will be geared down a little. Up until a year ago, nobody could have convinced me that we would opt for moving again, and to somewhere like Noosa Waters. But sometimes we have to change our ideas as we go along, and I'm sure we'll not regret this change.

I feel we've already had a small influence on some of the people here with our gardening ideas. I will still solar dry my excess produce. Also, we've kept our bee hives and have relocated them to a friend's property close by, with an arrangement to share honey with them. We have already found a ready

market for our honey right there on the spot at Noosa Waters.



**Jose Robinson,
Unit 61, Noosa Waters Estate,
39 Lake Weyba Drv, NOOSAVILLE 4566.**

Dear GR Folks,

Thanks for your contributions in such a great magazine. I discovered your magazine while visiting my inspiring friend Jenny Willoughby in NSW many years ago. I have slowly transformed my less than quarter-acre backyard, front yard and nature strip into a tiny permaculture and organic paradise. My neighbours have made me 10 good chook-proof planter boxes, a mobile chook tractor pen, and also helped move a heavy give-away chook pen to the shade of my lemon tree. It is very therapeutic to work and harvest in my peaceful garden. I suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder after eight years of spiritual abuse in a cult church in Adelaide. I would appreciate any experiences or genuine advice or letters of encouragement from any GR folk (but no religious fanatics or racists please). Also, it would be great to hear from those who have returned from Singapore or Malaysia and find the GR lifestyle a bliss. I have some Singapore recipes and Aussie seeds to give away.

**Suzanne Matthews,
13 Montacute St, ELIZABETH DOWNS 5113.
Ph: 08-8252-2245.**

Hi Everyone,

We love *Grass Roots*. I have most issues, right from the start. We are still finishing off our mudbrick loft house, of which we are very proud. I have a few questions for all of you. We installed a **DOWMUS TOILET SYSTEM** (under the slab) when we were building. The company has now folded and although we are mostly happy with our system we have a few hiccups: How to empty, deal with compost flies and occasional pong? We'd love to hear from others who may have a few tips.

Last year we travelled to WA and surrounds for three months. We were shocked at the cost of caravan parks, most charging four to five dollars extra per child per night. We have four young children and so found it very expensive. Next year we are travelling to Alice Springs, Darwin and home down the east coast. I wonder if anyone has ideas for cheaper, safe, **FAMILY-FRIENDLY PLACES TO STAY**. I've had a couple of scary incidents staying in slightly isolated places so we tend to keep away from them. We had the most fantastic time travelling, met many wonderful people and saw so much beauty. It was such an adventure for us. We have an old faithful campervan we use for our travels.

Last thing, my trees are infected terribly by curly leaf, they seem to be getting worse and worse. Help! Thanks, thanks. Love and peace to all.

**Chrissi & Al,
510 Yannathan Rd, NYORA 3987.**

Dear GR,

Wow, what a great magazine! As a new acreage owner I found the articles and Feedback in GR 153 a great source of information and inspiration. My husband and I are brimming with excitement at trying our hands at living semi-self-sufficiently, and with the wealth of knowledge found in this publication we should be super successful!

Would anyone in the GR family have a recipe for **ROSELLA JAM**? Sadly, when my grandmother passed away many of her famous recipes were lost forever. My rosellas are about two months away from fruiting and I would hate to waste the crop! Also, if anyone has any information on starting and running a seed bank, I would be most grateful. Thanks in advance. Looking forward to many hours of enjoyment from future issues.

**Jodie,
7 Homebush Drv, REGENTS PARK 4118.**

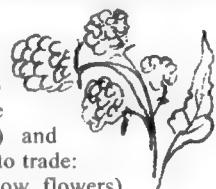
Dear GRs,

Having my son live with me has made me want to start again. Separated and divorced since 1990, I'm seeking to start (restart) getting the family properly functioning and producing in the bio-diverse and sustainable manner GR readers and writers strive for. I'm planning dams, saltwater and fresh, and creating an environment for creatures as diverse as octopus, turtles, flora and fauna to suit! I'm interested in a creature from Tasmania similar to its devil, and breeding hares. Anyone can write or phone: 02-4471-1370, to share or offer advice.

**Andy,
PO Box 3155, BATEHAVEN 2536.**

Dear GRs,

I am seeking root cuttings of **HOPS** (*Humulus lupulus*), **VALERIAN** (white flowers), **SAFFRON** (*Crocus sativus*) and **NEEM** seeds. I have the following seeds to trade: cape gooseberry, evening primrose (yellow flowers), Mexican sunflower and tobacco.



**Doris Fuller,
53 Paten St, REVESBY 2212.**

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GRs,

I am writing to answer Ron Wood's query about **BANANA WINE** in the latest issue of GR. As you probably know, you can make wine out of just about anything and bananas are no exception. Ripe bananas are supposed to have a sugar content of around 18 percent, not much different from grapes. I found, however, that when you don't mix them with other fruit in your wine making, the banana flavour comes through a bit too strongly for my taste. I always tried to include some juice from bananas boiled up in a muslin bag in any wine I made because I think it adds body and certainly aids in the clearing process.

My favourite wine was made from passionfruit mixed roughly as follows:

2 kg passionfruit pulp, ½ kg banana, 2 lemons, 2 cups raisins, 2 Campden tablets, 1.5 kg white sugar, 4 lt water, 1 tsp nutrient, 1 pkt wine yeast. Boil peeled very ripe bananas in a muslin bag in enough water to cover them for about half an hour. Add banana juice to a mixture of passionfruit pulp, lemon juice, raisins, sugar and Campden tablets and make up to five litres with cold water. Leave overnight and add yeast and nutrient. Rack two or three times over the next couple of months until star bright and bottle.

I used to ferment 300 gallons (1365 lt) at a time. Peter Lehmann analysed it once when I visited his winery. He liked its fruity flavour and recommended it should be a sparkling wine. I followed his recommendation and it was very successful.

These days I just brew my own beer in 45-litre batches. I use Coopers Brew Mix and reckon their stout makes as good a brew as I have ever tasted. I don't add any white sugar or banana, but do add about 350 grams of dark brown sugar and cut down on the water about 15 percent to add flavour and body.

I have shifted from Narrabeen to a caravan park here in Port Macquarie where I enjoy the quiet of the rural lifestyle with room for a good garden; much better than the noise and bustle of city life in Sydney. Hoping your brews turn out well.

Bob Rankin,
35 Port Gateway Tourist Park,
178 Oxley Hwy, PORT MACQUARIE 2444.

Dear GRs,

I had a laugh over Bob Rankin's article, 'Be Ruthless' (GR 154). I thought I was the only one who felt **GUILTY ABOUT PULLING OUT HEALTHY PLANTS**. I'd never have confessed to this before, but I'm sure I'm not the only one who can't bear to pull up seedlings to thin them out or decide which goes and which stays?

I remember an experiment conducted years ago that told us fruit and vegies cried when chopped. Well, that did me no good whatsoever, almost had a breakdown over the thought of it. I still think of it every time I pull a vegie up. I've found it's easier not to grow root vegies, and I prefer to grow perennials too. I don't feel bad breaking off a few leaves, but it must be a clean break, no tearing strips off the stem. How would you like to be skinned alive? I don't feel guilty breaking leaves off the perpetual lettuce or perennial spinach, nor beans, peas, tomatoes, but I'm careful to wait until the potato bush is dead before digging it up.

I'm smart enough to only plant two pumpkins or watermelons, and not in the same drill. I've got that problem licked. It's the darn root vegetables that I feel bad about, lovely carrots; can't you hear them cry as you pull them out, saying goodbye to their friends?

Maybe hydroponics is the way to go? Now don't all you GR gardeners out there try to tell me you don't feel like I do. I just bet there's another few like me too afraid to say anything about how they feel when murdering their vegies. At least Bob owned up and now I am too. When will someone produce carrots that grow above ground?

Robyn Leah,
61 Eighth St, WESTON 2326.

Dear GR Readers,

I am a South Gippslander living on a 2½-acre-plus wetlands Land for Wildlife property. Lots of water birds, a flotilla of geese – but no bulrushes. Can anyone tell me where I can buy **READY-TO-USE RUSH** suitable for chair seating? My six-year-old dining chairs are suffering from age, heat and several kittens. Melbourne *Yellow Pages* drew a blank, so maybe another state reader might be able to suggest a point of purchase.

I love GR's mixture of earth, innovation and creativity. It's the mag with the most.

Una Harding,
35 Landing Rd, FOSTER 3960.

Dear GR Readers,

Can you please help us with all these questions? Where **TO BUY CHEAPLY IN TASSIE OR AUSTRALIA** a small home with: established garden, rainwater tank, dam, solar power, two or three bedrooms, bathroom, open kitchen, living and dining area, garage or room to build one?

Where do we buy vegetable nonhybrid seeds or seedlings?

Any effective, natural recipes for cellulite?

What is the real name of the chocolate fruit and where can we get some? Haven't seen any here in the Blue Mountains yet.

Strawbale builders: Please make yourself/ves known to us with contact address and phone numbers for future quotes (and are they free?), should we consider building instead of buying.

How long does it take to go around Tassie (roughly)? We are considering a trip before relocating.

Thanks heaps to Laurel Dunphy for the beautiful writing on Tassie (GR 155 Feedback); that's what inspired us for future plans.

My husband is a stonemason by trade and has worked on Sydney's famous landmarks and other buildings. Any work guaranteed for his kind of work? Where?

Anyone wanting the recipes for: wacky cake (no eggs, no milk), yoghurt and apple cake (all in one bowl and bake), scones (never-fail recipe with lemonade)? Please send a business-size stamped envelope and I'll be happy to share them with you.

Thank you for nearly 10 years of down-to-earth reading. Keep up the good work – great mag.

Mrs A Vivarelli,
PO Box 6011, Katoomba 2780.

Dear Mary, Megg & all,

Things here have been busier than ever. The **RABBIT FARM** we started last year has taken off like a rocket. We are still building up our breeding stock and in the meantime supplying a butcher in one of the outer suburbs. He takes as many as we can supply and begs for more. As the rabbits increase, as rabbits do, we'll be able to supply other butchers and delis. We have had the plans for the new sheds passed by our local council, who are very far thinking and welcome any new business in the area. Meanwhile, springtime brought new lambs born from some of the ewes we saved. Roger Junior fathered them and they look just like daddy. We loaned RJ to our neighbour, Andrew, who lost his ram earlier in the year; his ewes should produce in the next week or so. The girls have now spurned RJ; he has done his job for this year, and so he wanders around the paddock looking lost.



Betty Ford,
85 Blackgate Rd, MOUNT SEYMOUR 7120.

Anonymous letters will not be published. Please indicate if you would like personal details to be withheld.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GRs,

In my article, 'From Rags to Grass Roots Riches' (GR 147), I mentioned a chap named **CHRIS PAPADAPALOUS** who travelled Australia promoting environmental issues as awareness education. If anyone knows the whereabouts of Chris, or his email address, please pass it on to me because there is a lot I have to thank him for.

For those fabulous GR readers who contacted me with comments about my previous article, thank you kindly for your feedback and input. One lady in Sydney tracked me down in Melbourne, phoned me and thanked me for the inspiration she gained from reading my article. This really touched my heart and is a sure sign of what this magazine has achieved. Others have seen my yurt advertised on the Internet and have called to ask why I am selling up. The simple answer is, my other uncompleted goal, to sail the world, is almost impossible to achieve when tied to a property and mortgage.

Due to my passion for actively promoting environmental lifestyles, solar power and alternative building practices, if I can be of assistance to anyone starting out on their GR journey, please feel free to contact me via email at: countrycraft@bigpond.com.au

Michael Barrett,

7 Laggan Crt, CARRARA 4211.

Dear Grass Roots Readers,

My partner and I have been living the **ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE FOR 30 YEARS**. We have 80 acres of forest overlooking the Coral Sea beside a creek, surrounded by mountains, with 4WD access, south of Cooktown, Qld. In our orchard and vegie garden we grow organic tropical food plants for our own consumption, drying the excess. We mill our own timber, have a great solar power system and a composting toilet. We are a WWOOF host farm and have visitors from overseas stay. We opened as a retreat for personal and spiritual development in 2001. As visionary artists, we hold creative workshops for personal development, travelling around Australia.

We are offering a home and fruit and vegies, our knowledge of alternative living and a wonderful lifestyle in exchange for help with the maintenance. Interested people please contact us.

Brolga & Kate Burkitt,
PO Box 441, COOKTOWN 4871.
Ph: 07-4069-6119.

Dear Grass Roots Family,

In GR 119 Linda Phillips asked for a solution for **SCOURS IN CALVES**. All calves kept in a yard must be kept out of the hot sun for the first few weeks and provided with shade till they start to eat grass or hay. One has only to go to a saleyard to see the suffering of these animals in summer.



I would like the company of a sober male pensioner in a new house near a national park, four miles from town. Share duties and expenses.

I'd like to share with readers my recipe for pickling chillies. First, make the pickling vinegar. Take 1200 ml white vinegar, 2 cups sugar, 30 g ginger, 30 g peppercorns, 15 g salt, 1 level teaspoon grated nutmeg, 1 piece garlic. Boil together for five minutes and strain. Keep in bottles for future use. Now, when pickling chillies, select amount of chillies, prepare and put into saucepan. Add to the saucepan enough pickling vinegar to just cover chillies, boil all together for five minutes. Do not remove seeds. Bottle into sterilised jars and label.

Roy Ruwoldt,
3 Mile, CROWS NEST 4355.

Hi GR,

Can anyone out there help me with a problem? **SMELLY TOWELS**. What causes this and how do you get rid of it? The towels are washed regularly and are not old. Help.

Keep up the good work.

Florrie,
PO Box 275, CAPEL 6271.



Dear GRs,

In the Aug/Sept 2002 issue of GR (pg 69) there was mentioned 'The Remedy', in connection with lemon trees and passionfruit vines. Could anyone please let me know if this mixture is suitable for most citrus trees, such as mandarins and oranges?

Mrs M McGough,
32 Laver St, MORAYFIELD 4506.

Dear Grass Roots,

I am a single mum with two children aged 9 and 4½ who are home schooled. I live with my father who is a disabled pensioner. My reason for writing is to share an idea and dream we have with you and your readers.

Twelve months ago we purchased a house in a country town, after spending 18 months travelling around Australia in a caravan. At the time we thought we were doing the right thing as we felt a need to become self-sufficient, but now know it was a mistake and was mainly due to pressure from family, friends and society to 'do the right thing by the children and give them stability'. Although we have been able to fulfil our desire for self-sufficiency by growing fruit, vegetables, herbs and having chooks, our dream to continue to travel and our love and respect for our native land continually pulls us away from our home. My children grew physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually while travelling and enjoyed it so much that they constantly ask when we are getting on the road again.

In the next twelve months we are hoping to get back on the road. I would like to take my skills, knowledge and resources (I am a qualified teacher) to families that choose an **ALTERNATIVE FORM OF SCHOOLING**. I have a photocopier so would be able to offer worksheets, craft ideas and resources, a friendly face to have a chat and two wonderful children to offer socialisation and friendship to other children. My father has 15 years experience as a wildlife carer and would love to share his experiences, knowledge and resources and educate others on our native animals. We feel that as a society we have a lot to offer each other and we would love to learn from the lifestyles and experiences of others. In return for our services all we would ask is the use of power should they require photocopied worksheets and a donation to cover copier ink and paper. We are also interested in the barter system, trading services for home-grown fruit and vegetables, eggs, herbs etc. We are currently seeking a double decker bus to fit out as our dream will be impossible to fulfil in a caravan.

We would love to hear from readers, especially those schooling alternatively, who feel that they would utilise a service such as the one we propose or who may have ideas or opinions on what would or would not work. Can any readers help us out with our **DOUBLE DECKER BUS**? The condition of the interior is not of great importance as we wish to rebuild it, but as we are pensioners cost is a factor. We are willing to travel to view or collect. Anyone who is considering travelling Australia or thinking about it might also write.

Last but not least, I would like to congratulate all at GR on a fantastic magazine. I have been purchasing the magazine for some years now and it never ceases to inspire me. Keep up the great work.

Jennifer Deaves,
36 Coach St, WALLABADAH 2343.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Grass Roots,

We recently discovered the magazine and thoroughly enjoy every issue. We MOVED TO TOWNSVILLE from the Blue Mountains about a year ago and have just bought an acre complete with ducks, chooks and geese. It is a quite barren acre except for seven existing mango trees and other fruit trees we have planted. We are keen to start growing our own vegetable and herb garden and also have a strong interest in solar energy. We would appreciate any advice from readers living in a similar climate about any of the above. This is our first home so any advice would be valued. Thank you for a great magazine, we look forward to future issues.

Chris & Michelle,

Email us at: mjmakin@bigpond.com

Dear Megg,

What is the greatest asset that any farmer can have? I don't care if he/she farms five flower pots on a windowsill, runs a five-acre hobby farm or a 5000-acre sheep property, the greatest asset is still the soil. Think seriously about this, so many farmers don't, and have sick, weak and unhealthy whatever it is that they're supposed to produce as the result. You produce your crop and plough in the remains; milk your cow, and later sell her off; but the SOIL is your permanent almost IRREPLACEABLE ASSET. Treat it accordingly.

You feel crook, so you go down to your local naturopath or chemist for some mineral tablets, but arrogantly forget that your soil also needs mineral boosters. Your plants (or pastures, and subsequently livestock) need a balanced diet too. Certain plant diseases are diet related, as is also the presence of certain weeds (sorrel for example). Ah, but what happens if you overdose yourself on certain mineral supplements? In essence, this is a main point of contention between hobbyists and traditional farmers. Your soil needs supplements to give your plants a balanced diet. This balanced diet also includes phosphates, contrary to the opinions of some.

Some farmers can visually assess their soil's quality by the health of plants and the pastures it produces or the selection and tallness (or stuntedness) of native timber and scrub, but a good plant or soil analysis is usually far more accurate. It costs, yes it costs, but not nearly as much as underproductive land costs in lost income; or worst still, land or pastures poisoned by the overuse of trace elements, or major ingredients through faulty diagnosis, overcorrection of problems or misinformation innocently passed on by well-meaning friends.

This is a very big and important subject which should be pursued much further, yet modified by the old adage, 'a little knowledge is a dangerous thing'. I am not against the use of artificial plant food supplements, but the overuse of certain fertilisers and trace elements damages the soil and empties the pocket. By all means use them, but with caution. Seek professional advice first (and I mean professional, not from the plant shop). Professional advice will save you heaps; treat it as an investment. Don't take your soil for granted, it is the genesis of all farming.

To change the topic a little, I noticed in your Dec/Jan edition an article on herb growing in which the writer uses the rotary hoe for soil preparation. When I was a young bloke, I used a Howard 21-inch-cut rotary hoe and my muscles bulged out of my ears. Seriously though, the long-term use of the rotary hoe is not good as it spoils the texture of your soil. It really costs to repair soil that now sets as hard as a brick.

You had an article on where to seek refuge in a fire. The writer suggested under a cliff. Fire descending a cliff will drop down

embers underneath your refuge, igniting spot fires which in turn will reach up and probably cook you. In mountainous country the wind bounces too. The writer also suggested that you retreat to stony ground. Between rocks there is still ground that produces grass and shrubs. You'll still get cooked. Out at Stoneyford, where I used to live, the very soil itself (because of its high humus content) also smoulders, and would smoulder on for weeks, weather permitting. If you are forced to drive through smoke, use your headlights so that you can more readily be seen, and travel with extreme caution.

George Read,
19 Campbell St, COLAC 3250.



Dear Megg & Mary,

I have read that PLANTING GERANIUMS around a property WILL STOP SNAKES. Is this a myth? I was intending to use this theory around my chicken run for that same purpose. Have any readers tried it, and does it work? I would like very much to thank you and your readers for their wonderful information, which is preparing me for my future life when the time comes.

Sally Grimshaw,
26 Stennis St, PASCOE VALE 3044.

Dear Grass Roots,

I am old and live alone. One of my staple foods is cold cooked rice and pasta cooked together and later eaten with sweet or savoury ingredients added. But I go into the garden and the rice often burns black on my wonderful steel saucepan. So, now, I have 15 centimetres of red ribbon on a safety pin beside the rice jar to be pinned on my dress when I go out. Mostly this works, but . . .

Marjorie Boyle,
93 Tills Street, CAIRNS 4870.



Dear GRs,

This is a reply to Laura Webb (GR 154) and Bill Knight (GR 151) on the subject of SKIN PROBLEMS. I developed a similar complaint about two years ago. I followed the dermatologist's prescriptions faithfully for a year, with no improvement, so I started trying the despised hippie alternative treatments. I hit the jackpot with raw juices. In fact, all of my lesions have healed over, and best of all, I'm free of the accursed itching. (It really does turn your life into torment.) The mixture I'm using at the moment is half-and-half carrot and apple juice, about half a litre, twice a day. It definitely works heaps better than corticosteroids and the only side effect is a long, satisfying pee every morning. I've also found ginseng tea to be very beneficial, as is almost any herbal remedy intended to flush the liver or kidneys, but that is probably linked to the fact that I was poisoned by the chemicals I was working with.

Apart from those two specifics, I'll just repeat what everybody has probably already told you, watch carefully for allergies, in my case it turned out to be lactose (very common apparently) and fragrances. The lactose wasn't too hard, after all there are a lot of lactose-intolerant people out there, but the fragrance is a nightmare; virtually all cleaning and personal hygiene products have fragrance, even toilet paper is a no-no! I've managed to find substitutes for just about everything, except deodorant. If anyone out there knows a recipe for HOMEMADE DEODORANT, my friends would love you to let me know!

Jim Berridge,
3/5 York Tee, FERRYDEN PARK 5010.

Contributors and correspondents who want letters or articles returned are requested to include correct postage.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GRs,

In reply to Alex, and for any others with similar problems, regarding **SKIN RASHES**. It sounds like the fungal infection from which I've suffered for decades. But it can be easily controlled by simple hygiene and sunlight, yes, sunlight. Avoid soap in that area, wear loose clothing, preferably without underclothes. Don't share towels! It's highly infectious, liking moist areas such as under breasts, folds of flesh, armpits, crutch, around scrotum. I've evolved a life pattern to accommodate it: nonrestrictive clothing, and a few minutes sunbathing several times a week. Initially it was 20 minutes on alternate days, but once it cleared up a few minutes is sufficient. I strip off to hang washing out, having taken reasonable precautions not to offend others. It's important, of course, to avoid UV danger times, so do this before 10.30am. This treatment was recommended by our GP, who was a former army medico on the Kokoda Trail and knew a lot about fungi.

Don,

RMB 1575, KATUNGA 3640.

Dear People,

Penny Ferguson wrote asking about **BIODEGRADABLE PLASTIC BAGS** which appeared last year on 'Gardening Australia'. The manufacturer is Mater Bi Plc, a Spanish company, but now the bags are made in Australia.

I recall some years back, when I was the editor of an industry environmental periodical for International Business Communications, degradable plastic bags made their first appearance. They were greeted with enthusiasm, but people soon realised that: they did nothing to reduce the production and use of plastic bags or to address waste (some argued that they encouraged waste production), they degraded only under sunlight, and there was precious little sunlight down in a landfill. Perhaps this latest generation of the technology performs better.

Russ Grayson.

Dear GR Friends,

Could someone please help us? We are a young, outgoing, creative family looking to move to a nice friendly area in NSW or Qld. Somewhere near the coast (at the beach would be better), where there are nice, **FRIENDLY ALTERNATIVE-MINDED** people who love art, self-sufficiency, decency, creativity, growing vegies, fruit etc. Somewhere there is a good local pub with music and dancing, fun for the kids and a beautiful environment. Also good markets around as we are artists. We are currently living at Etttrick in northern NSW near Kyogle, but aren't getting what we need out of life here. We need an affordable area. If there is anyone who has travelled or who knows of a suitable area please write to us. Even people who are looking for friends (penpals) please write also, all welcome. Thanks so much.

B S Middleton,

Lot 20 Knights Rd, ETTRICK 2474.

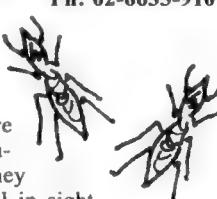
Ph: 02-6633-9101.

Dear Editor,

We are desperate for a solution to **WASPS**. They have invaded our Drizabones, Akubras, every tap fitting, tool or gas fitting in sight, and are now invading our home. Leave one window or door open and the party starts. They are smart enough now to attack any wall in sight and even get into the washing basket. We have the same problem in our mango plantation. Do any of you wonderful people have any solution to this problem? We cannot even go out and feed the chooks without being attacked.

Abe & Carol Bos,

156 Coast Rd, ROSEDALE 4674.



Hi There Fellow GR Readers,

Are you looking for a **PEACEFUL PLACE IN THE COUNTRY TO CALL HOME**? A place where you can wander through the bush listening to birds and breeze rather than the roar of traffic and blaring radios? Do you want to be a part of a family that frequently includes a young adult or two from overseas? Do you take pleasure in discussions on living and language and the meaningful issue of life?

We are looking for someone who loves country life, enjoys quietness, is a nondrinker/smoker and is experienced in building with stone or mudbrick, can wield a hammer and is able and happy to improvise when resources are limited. If you understand a little about solar and wind power and enjoy trying out alternative ways of farming and living to make minimum impact on the environment, this would be an advantage. We can offer you a place in our family in exchange for some help around the farm. You'd share accommodation in an old but comfortable flat at the front of the house, have most meals with us and the invitation to join in our family activities. We are unable to offer paid employment, but occasionally a bit of casual work comes up on the surrounding farms. It would be an advantage to have your own vehicle.

We are a Christian couple, have a developing farm, but live on another property several kilometres away as we still have to build a home and workshops. We are a 20-minute drive from the main town for our area which is popular with eco-minded and international tourists who love our wildlife and unspoilt bush and beaches. We are WWOOF hosts and every now and then also have someone from overseas living in and studying English with us.

You may be looking for a stopping place for several months before moving on to new horizons and adventures, or seeking a long-term home. If you are running away from unresolved problems in your life, this is probably not the place to come, but if you are seeking meaning and direction for your future, you'd have the opportunity and space to explore them. If you're interested, you can email us at farmlink@bigpond.com and tell us about yourself or give us a call on 08-8553-9175 – in the evening is best – and we can have a chat.

Lorraine Zinnack,
Kangaroo Island.

Dear Megg & Co,

It's rained at last, 200 wonderful millimetres. The dams are full, my sheep came through the dry still fat and are lambing. I had an enormous growth of paspalum and New Zealand rye last year, fertilised with duck poo, and the old ewes have been maintaining themselves on stalks, seed and a urea block to help them digest the rough feed.

The lovely lady at the local library found me *Duck Keeping for Beginners*, by Helen Putland, Kangaroo Press 1998. I loved the bit on dealers: 'the blight on the industry'. Been there. She didn't mention the one who rings up, gets a price and turns up after you've fed them for another three weeks. Then he offers you a price for the smaller ones, says he'll be back in a fortnight, and you never see him again. You wonder how many other ducks are being kept for him and eating their heads off.

Did I tell you (I bet I did), I won breeding pair at the Hunter Valley Waterfowl Show in May 2002? It was invitation only and it was an honour to get an invitation in itself. Most of the winners of the Muscovy class were my breed, and I decided to give the exhibitors a run for their money. I must confess, I could present a better groomed bird. I just grab the cleanest looking ones out of the yard and crate them the night before. It's about 120 miles to Cessnock so I have to start early.

Ken Cooper,
Colbe's, NE Hwy, MURRURUNDI 2338.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR,

I just found in a Feedback letter a request for **EYE EXERCISES**. Some years ago I had a bad pain in both of my eyes. I was given some medication from an eye specialist, but only gained some relief. Meanwhile, I travelled to Europe and in Germany I read in a magazine about an eye specialist in Heidelberg who could make blind people see. I did not believe that, but thought to myself, it's no harm in going to see her. She showed me some exercises which I will try to explain here.

Look up and down 20 times.

Look to the left and right 20 times.

Look right side up left side down 20 times.

Look left side up right side down 20 times.

Squeeze tight.

Roll right to left 20 times.

Roll left to right 20 times.

Palm eyes for two minutes with both hands.

Thanks for a great magazine. It has helped me a lot and hopefully will help you.

Henrietta,
PO Box 109, THE SUMMIT 4377.

Dear Grass Roots Readers,

This is my first letter to *Grass Roots* even though I have been reading and collecting since the early 1980s. I have always found the magazine a wealth of information and sanity overall. My question is to any older ladies out there who are going through or have been through **MENOPAUSE**. I would love to hear how they have coped with this natural event. Every woman I know is taking HRT to help them get through this time. Is there a natural alternative? Surely women must have coped without HRT in the bush and outback. So if anyone could enlighten me I would love to hear from you.

Tina Marsh,
63 Crescent Ave, HOPE ISLAND 4212.
Email: brentina@winshop.com.au

Dear Grass Roots Folk,

Thank you for another year's worth of your magazine. Here in metropolitan Melbourne we are not only allowed to have rainwater tanks, but are also allowed to **RECYCLE OUR GREYWATER** now. After trying one of those rubber devices you stick into the outlet pipe through the inspection hole, only to have the sink fill up in the laundry and spill onto the floor, we now have a recycled plastic 200-litre drum outside the laundry window that the wash water runs directly into then out a hose at the bottom. This works much better. I wonder if there are any do's or don'ts regarding the use of wash water and if there are some things you should never add to the wash if you are using the water. So far we have only used it on the lawn, which seems to be coping.

Shellie Kavanagh,
Email: shellie_kavanagh@hotmail.com

We hope you found the information on greywater in GR 155 to be useful Shellie.

Dear Grass Roots,

I have just purchased a **GALAXY LIVING FOOD PROCESSOR**. Does anyone who has one have the recipe for making soy milk? The little book that came with the machine doesn't have many recipes. Has anyone made use of the pulp that is left after juicing carrots etc? Also, can anyone help me find where I can get a **WATER RECYCLING PLUG**. The Thirsty Earth Company used to advertise in GR but I haven't seen their ad for awhile. I would like to get one if they are still around. Has anyone got one and do they work? Any advice would be most appreciated, love to hear from you.

Chris Baldock,
PO Box 305, KI KI 5261.

Hello GR Readers & Staff,

Why oh why did I start **FEEDING MAGPIES**? Someone should have told me that once started they would be forever on my food bill, complete with their offspring. This morning the two babies, and I use the word lightly as they are as big as the mum and dad, kept hopping up and down on the doorstep and trying hard to warble like their parents. Obviously, they have connected the song with the food and how right they were! How can I possibly resist that melodious sound coming from the throat of a fat black and white magpie on my windowsill? I do not allow them to rely entirely on me, however, and they know that they don't get fed every time they come, but I do weaken two or three times a week at least.



Since I had my new thumb joint I am full of plans for more spinning and crocheting and sewing, and you name it. How nice to have two 100 percent hands again. I am composting for the first time in years and with the help of advice from GR I think it is going okay.

I decided to make a polenta fruitcake last week, a first time for me. It tasted lovely, but it hit the stomach with a thud. Why? Because, dear readers, I had used polenta as stated, but I forgot and used my own polenta out of my jar, and as I make polenta with half polenta meal and half semolina the result was a somewhat moist but heavy cake. Ah well, the chickens walked around bending at the knees a bit that afternoon but they survived it. Keep writing, you'd be surprised what we older ones learn from all of you and we love it.

J Pavese,
COOROY 4563.

Dear Madam,

There was a mistake in the letter by Ganesh published in GR 155 about **MIRACLE OIL**. Miracle oil does not cure skin cancer – it has to be removed by a doctor. Miracle oil is very good for a range of skin conditions in humans and animals. It is a totally natural product, nontoxic with no known side effects.

People are phoning me asking if I could treat skin cancer – no way! Please correct in the next edition so there is no more confusion among *Grass Roots* readers. For information about dog treatment people can contact me on: 07-3351-5531.

Pushpa,

99 Narellan St, ARANA HILLS 4054.

Dear GR Lovelies,

I am desperately **SEEKING JULIE!** (with hubby and three children) who wrote to me in November 2002 from West Wyalong and was moving (moved?) to near Casino in early 2003. Please, send me your address as I lost your envelope! I appreciated your letter and have so much to share with you. Please drop me a note!

Karen Bloomfield,
TABULAM 2469.

Dear Editors,

I would like to contact **MR & MRS MARK HANSON**, mentioned in GR 132 April/May 1999. I would like to learn more **ABOUT PERMACULTURE**. For the last 20 years we have lived on seven acres, a disused passionfruit farm, and have had a garden, fowls, cows, horses and other animals over this time, but I am always eager to learn more. I would also like to buy a **CREAM SEPARATOR** and learn more about **CHEESE MAKING**.

Jennifer,
'Sunny Meadows', PO Box 852, PARK RIDGE 4125.

Amphibian Encounters Of The Worst Kind

by Jan Farrar, Kilkivan, Qld.

When I first moved to my longed-for Queensland country property in January 1996, I was of course prepared to confront the wilder side of life. After all, as the child of an RAF officer, I had spent three years in the Aden Protectorate (Saudi Arabia) and a further year in East Africa, during which I went on three safaris through the Tsavo National Game Park to stay at a lodge on Mt Kibu, the little known twin peak of mighty Kilimanjaro. It was in 1958.

There, I came close to being eaten by a pride of lions while attending to the call of nature behind a bush, and was almost crocodile dessert when I wandered off and fell asleep near a large water hole. I was eight years old at the time and saved only by the fact that some sixth sense woke me in time to see a drifting 'log' blink a cold, reptilian eye, only several feet away from my legs, which were dangling in the cold water. My fearful screeches no doubt echoed all the way to Mombassa or Nairobi. Thankfully, my father's aide, a wonderful Swahili man I had nicknamed 'Jumbo', suddenly appeared to drag me away from the bank, hurling verbal curses at the cruising crocodile. Given the trouble I got into with my parents for wandering off, being croc takeaway might have been easier.

Queensland, at age 46, and that finally obtained dream of my own place in the country was, of course, going to be as easy as ABC, wasn't it? What's that old saying about pride going before a fall? I ought to have taken note because six months later an unassuming Kermit character almost brought me to my knees.

At first, I was just so happy to see green tree frogs around my place. More than anything, it told me that no chemicals had been used on my land. When they moved into my bathroom, I was really pleased. I could commune with nature in the evening and always be sure



Diabolical sink-loving Kermit. Photo by Clare Colins.

that I would have half a dozen smiling frogs to talk to. I also acquired three little native frogs that I dubbed 'Brown Bandits' because of the Zorro-like stripe over their eyes. I named them 'Eenie, Meenie and Mo' and they lived in the cistern. The two biggest greenies I named 'Freddo' and 'Kermit'. Kermit took up residence in a magnificent green glazed vase I had bought at a pottery exhibition for \$180 in the days when I had a weekly wage. It looked lovely on the side of my bath, and a cute green frog emerging from his daytime hidey-hole was just so wonderful.

When I wrote back to my pals in NSW, I waxed lyrical about 'my' frogs. The time came when my best friends paid a visit. That first night, the bathroom rang with shrieks. Well, I had warned everyone to have their baths before dusk, but you can't tell these

city people anything! The first victim was relaxing in a bubble bath with a Mills & Boon romance and a glass of wine. She was rudely awakened from her romantic daydreams, not by some handsome and muscular he-man, but by either Freddo or Kermit landing on her face in a rude, wet splat. She left the bathroom in a huff and my joking comment about disguised fairy-tale princes was answered by language too strongly suggestive to even remember, much less put into print.

Soon after that, her youngest daughter fled the bathroom in tears. She had been attending to personal business. On rising and just before flushing, she had spied a smiling green froggy face in the toilet bowl. My own fears about some innocent frog being flushed around the U-bend and consigned to death in the septic tank were not her concern. I had reckoned without the prudish sensibilities of a twelve-year-old; she was totally mortified that some creature had witnessed certain portions of her anatomy not seen since she graduated from nappies.

The trip was not a success. My friends left after only two days, muttering about finding some sanity at Tin Can Bay. I could have told them about the bad sand-fly problem there, but it might have sounded like sour grapes.

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Donna & Hugh Anthony, Kyrrhet Stage Co
131 Old Coach Way, Yandina. Q. 4561.
Ph: 07-5446-7049

Email: kyrrhet@bigpond.com.au
Website: http://minicattle.virtualave.net

The second time a friend came to stay, one Brown Bandit somehow got into her suitcase. It was discovered in a terminal state amongst her expensive French lingerie. She became another Kilkivan dropout, preferring to spend her next holiday skiing at Perisher. Obviously, the possibility of broken bones and total paraplegia were preferable to another stay at 'Possum's Pocket'.

The crunch came one hot summer night. I was awoken by a loud crash in the bathroom and raced out to see my lovely and expensive green vase lying broken in the bath. In the ruins, Freddo and Kermit were glowering at one another and a smaller and quite obviously female frog sat grinning on the edge of the bath.

The honeymoon was over. Relocation seemed the best option. The results depend upon your mood as to how far you can fling a frog. Given my temper that night, it's a wonder that Freddo and Kermit didn't make amphibious history by achieving planetary orbit, but within two nights either their doubles or close relatives had once again taken up residence in my bathroom.

Five years down the track, frog wars are still a major item at 'Possum's Pocket'. No matter how carefully I remind myself to close the window or door, there are still times when I forget. A constant trickling in the cistern alerts me - I lift the lid to find maybe up to half a dozen Kermits inhabiting my toilet tank. These days I wet my hand so as not to cause them any discomfort from the acids in my skin, then carefully lift them out and plop them into several hanging fern baskets on my back deck. A week later, they have all graduated back to their cosy frog haven.

I guess a truce is in order here. I've been advised to put salt in my cistern. Ever had salt in a raw wound? Maybe that's how a frog would feel all over, so I won't do it. Meanwhile, I suppose I just have to keep on doing the Amphibious Progression Dance - three frogs in, three frogs out, flush the bowl, turn around, four frogs in, four frogs out, flush the bowl . . . *



HOREHOUND

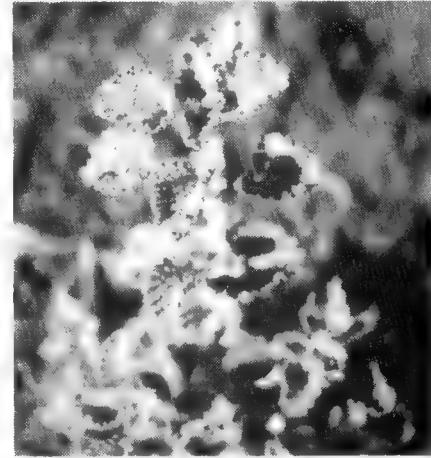
Noxious Weed or Miracle Medicine?

by Deborah McDonnell, Walpeup, Vic.

Horehound is generally considered a noxious invasive weed. The little bushes are hardy and persistent growers, making them very hard to eradicate. They regularly produce multiple spirals of prickly little seed pods that cling to anything from a child's clothes to an animal's coat. So yes, it is an annoying pest, but even this little headache has its virtues.

In 1996 we lived in Healesville. This area is semi-rainforest, near the mountains, and tends to get very cold and wet. Sometimes it can rain for a week solid, without letting up, no kidding. Every year it flooded, every now and again it snowed. In this cold, damp environment my father contracted a serious cough. All day he coughed; it wouldn't go away. Doctors were consulted; they told him that if he didn't move away from Healesville to a drier area, the cough would kill him, and even then he would have it for the rest of his life.

So we moved out to the Mallee, a dry, dusty semi-desert. My father lived, but the cough still plagued him. He looked up all possible cough remedies, anything that might help, but nothing worked. Eventually, he discovered that horehound, which is quite a prolific weed around this region, was formerly used as a cough medicine by herbalists. So he tried it. He brewed a tea by throwing a large handful of the fresh leaves, or about a heaped tablespoon of the dried, into a pot of boiling water, boiling rapidly for five minutes, then drinking cupfuls of the infusion several times a day. The concoction tastes vile, so it was an act of faith and determination to keep taking the foul tasting brew. I don't know how he did it, I couldn't have, but in the end it paid off.



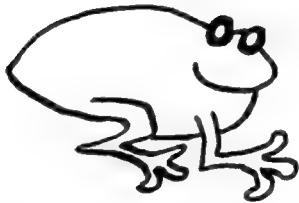
It didn't happen at once. It took about a month or two, but at long last the cough the doctors said was incurable was gone. And all thanks to the little wild herb white horehound, so hated yet so very special in its own way.

Our family has used horehound to treat all manner of coughs and colds since. It tastes horrible, but then, doesn't all cough medicine? And it works. Horehound sure is potent stuff, and indispensable when it comes to a persistent cough. My father owes his current good health to this much despised weed that turned out to be so significant to him. *



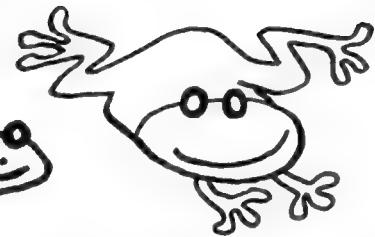
ORGANIC EXCELS

The Australian market for organic products has more than doubled in the last five years, with sales rising from \$8.5 million in 1995 to \$200 million in 2000. Although market share is only about 1 percent, annual growth is around 25 percent and much of the fruit and vegetable harvest is being exported to Japan, Britain and Germany. *



KIDS PAGE

FROGGIE FUN



Frogs are amphibians - animals that spend some of their lives in water and some on land. Frogs have to be in water to lay their eggs. They cannot live in the sea or any salt water. Frogs' eggs are laid in water and then hatch into tadpoles, which breathe with gills and swim with a tail. As they grow up they lose their tail and develop lungs for breathing air. Frogs have long powerful jumping legs and a very short spine, and many of them have teeth. Frogs' teeth are small and conical shaped; they are not used for chewing, but to help hold prey so it doesn't escape, and maybe to crush it too. Frogs eat insects (which they catch with their long sticky tongue) and worms and small fish. They have webbed feet for swimming and jumping. Frogs absorb water through their skin so they don't need to drink. Frogs bury themselves in sand or mud and hibernate in cold winter climates.

Edible Frogs

It's not very obvious why these classic North American biscuits are called frogs, but they are. I think if you added a couple of oats as big eyes and sat them on green paper lily pads, they would be more convincing!

You will need:

- 1/2 cup cocoa
- 2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 1 cup coconut
- 3 cups rolled oats

Put cocoa, sugar, milk and butter into a large saucepan. Boil for 5 minutes then remove from heat. Stir in vanilla, coconut and oats. Mix well. Drop tablespoons of mixture onto greased baking trays. Refrigerate for one hour or until set. Makes 3 - 4 dozen 'frogs'.

Invite Frogs Into Your Garden

Frogs are in danger in many parts of the world, often due to lack of clean habitats. You and your parents could follow this pond construction guide to help their survival.

★ Build a pond of any size you like with a depth of between 40 and 80 centimetres. Line with sand and plastic sheeting or a long-life pond liner.

★ Surround with rocks and branches. Fill pond with water and add a water purifier (available from aquariums).

★ Add aquatic plants, which are available from water garden specialists. You need a mixture of underwater plants, floating plants such as water lilies and plants that rise out of the water such as river bamboo.

★ Add fish, but not goldfish or they will eat tadpoles. Check with a reliable local aquarium for the most suitable native species.

★ Now watch out for frogs!

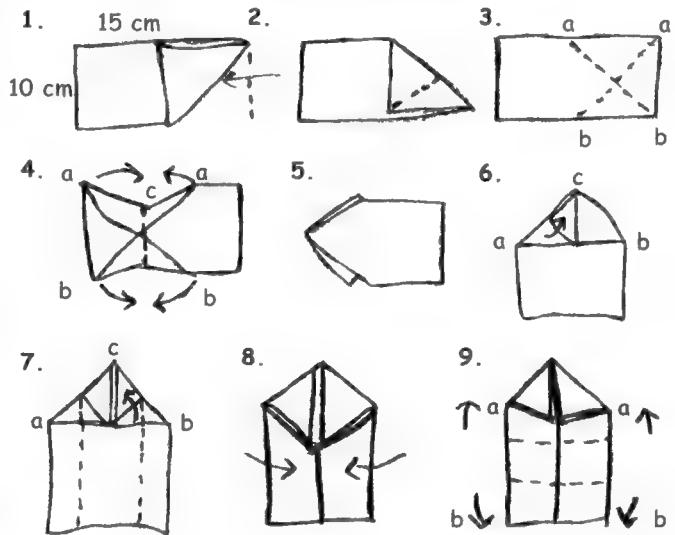
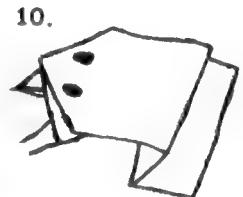
** Ponds of any size/depth are a big danger to small children. Secure a piece of strong mesh just below the water surface to aid safety.

Origami Frog - It Jumps!

You will need:

a piece of green paper 10 cm by 15 cm.

1. Fold to make a creased line. Open it up. Fold other side.
2. Fold to make crease.
3. Open up.
4. Fold a to meet a and b to meet b. This will create creased line c.
5. This is what you should now have.
6. Turn over and fold top piece of point a to meet point c and fold top piece of point b to meet point c also.
7. Fold on the dotted lines.
8. This is what you should have now.
9. Fold a forward and fold b backwards.
10. Decorate your frog with paint or pencils.



IN THE KITCHEN

Remember soggy tomato sandwiches in the school lunch box? Put that prejudice behind you. Tomatoes are one of the most popular ingredients in today's flavoursome multicultural cooking bonanza. Even better, they're so easy to grow and use. Delight your taste buds with these simple, scrumptious and speedy recipes and give the soggy sangas to the chooks.

FRENCH BREAD MINI PIZZAS

1 loaf French bread (pref wholemeal), sliced 2 cm thick

1/3 cup olive oil

6 cloves garlic

330 g tin tomato paste

2 tomatoes, sliced

1 cup mozzarella, grated

basil leaves

optional: avocado, olives, salami, pineapple, capsicum, any pizza topping

Paint each slice of bread with olive oil and rub with garlic. Put in oven at 180° C and cook for 10 minutes, until lightly crisped. Remove, spread with paste, top with a slice of tomato, sprinkle with cheese and add desired toppings. Put back in oven for 5 minutes, or until cheese is melted and bubbly. Take out, garnish with basil. Makes 12.

NO-COOK PASTA SAUCE

boiling water

375 g soyaroni (or pasta of choice, this one has a nice nutty flavour)

3 medium tomatoes

100 g sundried tomatoes

1/2 cup feta cheese

1/4 cup basil leaves, chopped

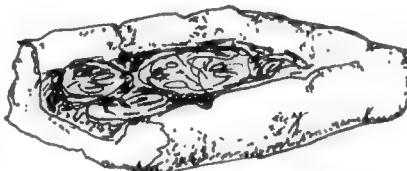
3 tbsp olive oil

3 tbsp balsamic vinegar

Pour boiling water into a large saucepan, place on a hotplate and add pasta. Cook until *al dente*, then remove from heat and drain.

While pasta is cooking, chop tomatoes into 2 cm cubes and cut sundried tomatoes into halves. Slice feta into 2 cm cubes. Combine tomato, sundried tomatoes, feta and basil in a bowl, pour in oil and vinegar and mix. Taste and add more oil or vinegar if necessary. Toss through pasta and serve. Serves 2.

Variations: try adding cubed fresh tofu marinated in oil and balsamic vinegar, or a 200 g tin of tuna in olive oil, or olives or toasted pine nuts.



TOMATO & PARMESAN TART

1 piece shortcrust pastry

1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

1/4 tsp black pepper

2 eggs

3/4 cup cream

1 tsp salt

1/2 tsp black pepper

4 tomatoes

1/2 cup Parmesan cheese extra

Roll out pastry and sprinkle with Parmesan and black pepper. Roll out again so they become embedded. Cut into two long oblong shapes and place on tart tray, turning up sides. Rest in fridge for 15 minutes.

Preheat oven to 200° C. Prebake crust for 20 minutes until a pale golden brown. While crust is cooking, in a small bowl, beat eggs with cream and salt and pepper. Set aside. Slice tomatoes and let sit on an absorbent towel to soak up excess juices.

Remove part-cooked tart crust from oven, sprinkle one-quarter of the remaining Parmesan on the bottom. Then place tomatoes in single layer, slightly overlapping. Pour cream mixture over, sprinkle with remaining Parmesan. Bake at 200° C for 20 to 25 minutes until set. Serve hot or let cool to room temperature.

GREEN TOMATO SOUP

1 tbsp olive oil

2 cloves garlic, crushed

1 lge brown onion, chopped finely

2 tsp curry powder

4 lge green tomatoes, peeled and cubed

1 lge potato, peeled and cubed

2 cups vegie stock

2 tbsp fresh mint, chopped

1 tbsp raw sugar

1/2 cup cream

In a large saucepan over a medium heat, combine oil, garlic, onion and curry powder. Cook, stirring, until onion is translucent.

Add tomatoes, potato, stock, mint and raw sugar. Bring to the boil, reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 45 minutes. Purée in a blender (do several batches if you need to) then reheat. Taste and add salt, pepper and more sugar if required. Stir in cream and serve. Tastes just as good chilled. Serves 4.

TOMATO CURRY

2 tbsp oil

1 lge onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, crushed

2 green chillies, chopped

knob fresh ginger, grated

1 tsp mustard seeds

1 bay leaf

1 tsp chilli powder

2 tsp ground coriander

1 tsp ground turmeric

5 tomatoes, peeled and chopped

1 cup vegie stock

2 tsp salt

2 tbsp desiccated coconut

vegies of choice, such as carrot, broccoli, squash, cauli, chopped

Heat oil in a large saucepan and fry the onion and garlic until soft. Add the mustard seeds and the rest of the spices except the salt. Cook for 5 minutes then add the tomatoes. Bring to the boil and add sufficient vegie stock to make a moist curry. Sprinkle in salt and coconut.

Cover pan and simmer for 30 minutes before adding vegies. Cook another 10 minutes, adding more stock if necessary. Serves 4 with jasmine rice. ♦

CHAPATTIS

Healthy Fast Food

by Trevor Wilkins, Sandy Beach, Russell Island.

Visitors to my holiday house/canoe design centre here on Russell Island come from every corner of the globe and I'm continually learning great new recipes. For me cooking has to be quick and easy, but it also needs to be fun, and the food nutritious, tasty and economical. Even more importantly, it should be interesting, exciting and exotic. After all, you only live once! No greasy bacon and eggs for me! Why? Well, all around my friends seem to be dropping of heart disease and bowel cancer and I want to make 100 not out, still fishing, sailing and hav'n a good time. Yeah!

Also, when I travel I need to cook outdoors, often on the deck of my catamaran or in the galley of my mobile home, on a mountain top or on a sandy beach. In other words, I need to do it anywhere and everywhere, and quickly.

The one recipe that has changed my lifestyle forever, and that provides all of the above and more, is the humble Indian chapatti. And, get this, they cost almost nothing. No more running off to the shops for another loaf of bread.

The Oxford dictionary description for chapatti is 'small thin cake of unleavened bread'. The word is pronounced 'chupp-pat-te' and can also be spelt chupatty, chupatti or chapati. The actual recipe is even less set-in-stone. It depends if you prefer your cooking to be plain, easy and simple, or slow, showy and complicated. If you like the latter, you can use a food processor for mixing. You can also use less water and knead the dough like conventional bread. You could even use an electric bread maker to mix the dough. Then, after waiting two and a half hours for the dough to rise, you will roll it flat

into a chapatti using a rolling pin and floured board.

But if you are like me, basically lazy but always hungry, then you will simply pour water or milk into a coffee cup, gradually fill the cup with your chapatti flour mix while stirring with a long-handled teaspoon or chopstick. You will then pour the moist custard-consistency mix, pancake style, into a moderately hot and oily circular frying pan, turning the chapatti to cook the other side when it's stiff enough to flip. An egg flipper does the job just fine.

When I'm pressed for time the whole process (including grinding wheat grain into flour) can take me less than 10 minutes. No other food satisfies my hunger pangs like chapattis. My grain grinder is set to coarse, so these chapattis have a wholesome grainy, chewy texture. Chapattis



Chapattis can be as simple or as complicated as you choose and are ideal for outdoor cooking.



When cooked on one side, flip over to cook the reverse till it's a golden colour.

should be cooked slowly until they are crisp and golden on the outside. How easy is that?

Once poured into the pan, the mixture should be spread evenly and smoothed flat with a spoon or spatula. Lumps or high spots in the pastry will burn when it is cooked on the flip side, producing unattractive spots of ugly black charcoal. Slow cooking on low heat is the trick, giving the heat time to penetrate into the mixture.

Freshly ground whole-grain chapattis are the all-time perfect pizza base. Cut into wedges they make a tasty 'base' for all sorts of spreads, or onion and cheese. Yum! Here's another big plus, these bread pieces are moist inside and need no butter or marg to clog up your arteries. They can be eaten by themselves, like big hot and wholesome freshly baked biscuits. If I leave the pieces in the sun and wind to dry out for a few hours, I get perfect crispbreads for cheese, salami and wine on the balcony at sunset.

I have a wheat grinder that I have used daily for the past 10 years and I cannot even begin to imagine life without it. Alicia, my superwonderful daughter, shouts my chickens and I a 40-kilogram bag of organic wheat every six months. She will take no money for they cost her 'only \$11 a bag'. I have calculated that in food value (hunger wise) just one of my chemical-free chapattis is equal to about two modern loaves of sliced white commercial bakery melt-in-your-mouth 'fairy floss' bread. To get really fine flour the wheat needs to pass twice through my grinder, otherwise the chapattis are too crusty and not popular with my guests. As you will see, I have another answer to this problem.

If the idea of all this healthy hard work is putting you off, or you have not yet bought your grain grinder, you can always use some of those premixed grain bread flours you see in the supermarkets. Chapattis are best when they rise slightly in the pan, so, though chapattis are traditionally unleavened, do add the yeast that is included in the package because the flour in these mixes always seems to be made from processed plain flour. I've tried many brands of premixed breads for making chapattis and if I blended them with



Chapattis can be cooked in a variety of ways; over a small portable cooker is easy but a wood fire will add a distinctive flavour.

whole-grain self-raising flour they worked out 'okay', but not fantastic. Put it this way: my cats and kookaburras won't eat them; they just love the 'real thing'.

These 'primitive' flat breads have been around for a long time, ever since the human race discovered fire. I find it fascinating how every civilisation developed its own unique recipes, usually made from grass seeds ground between stones and baked on hot coals or on flat rocks. The American Indians made a flat corn bread on large, hot, flat rocks very similar to the Indian flat breads from India. And the Australian Aboriginals made a loaf of bread almost identical to our modern damper.

I like my chapattis to rise slightly while cooking in the pan so they are slightly airy. I am not keen on the tart taste of baking soda so I blend my chapatti mix, half home-ground wheat flour with half supermarket brand wholemeal self-raising flour.

For a little extra taste punch, I pop a few dried chillies into the wheat-filled hopper of my grain grinder. A mixture of grains such as barley, rice, corn and soya beans also adds to the overall wholesomeness and flavour. I always test the taste of my mixture just before pouring it into the pan. Chapattis cooked over a wood fire will have that

unparalleled smoky flavour. They are the ultimate healthy, no-fuss fast food. Just perfect for campers, travellers and barbecues. Remember to first clean and lightly oil the barbie plate. A quick and accurate heat test is when drops of cold water 'dance' over your plate or pan. Too hot and you have charcoal, too cold and your mixture runs to the edge of the pan or off the edge of your barbie plate.

You can experiment as much as you like. Only yesterday I tried laying sheets of sushi seaweed into my chapatti mix as it was being poured onto the pan. The results were gobbed up by my 'food tasters' even quicker than usual. No leftovers around here. Pan-fried sushi seaweed sheet sandwiches? Try and say that six times in a hurry. *

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Channel Road, Walkamin Qld 4872

Raising Meat Rabbits

by Mick Schultz, Drake, NSW.

As the French discovered years ago, rabbits are easy to breed, cheap to run and taste terrific. GR readers might also enjoy the added benefit of high-nitrogen fertiliser for the garden.

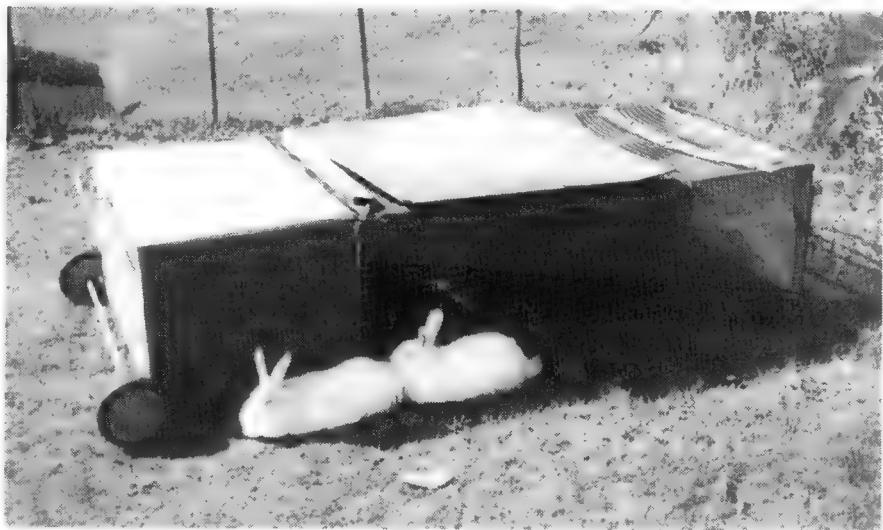
Requests for information on raising meat rabbits have appeared in GR from time to time over the years. I hope interested readers will benefit from my experience.

SELECTING STOCK

The main breeds of meat rabbits have all descended from the wild European rabbit. These include: New Zealand White (4 – 5 kilograms), Californian (3.5 – 4.5 kilograms), Chinchilla Gigantica (4 – 5 kilograms), British and Flemish Giant (5 – 5.5 kilograms). When purchasing stock, look for clean, healthy surroundings and animals with shiny coats, bright eyes and clean ears and noses. Their behaviour should be neither timid nor aggressive because their attitudes could be passed on to their offspring.

HOUSING

Hutches vary in design, but the code of practice for the welfare of animals states that the minimum floor space for a rabbit of breeding age should be at least 0.56 square metres and a height of 45 centimetres (so they can sit with their ears erect). This measurement is for intensive farming similar to battery hens. My preference is to be able to let rabbits out into an enclosed area for daily exercise. Fences do not have to be high (1200 millimetres), but must be buried 600 millimetres in the ground. It might also be necessary to cover the area with a fine mesh if predators are a problem. Hutches should provide maximum protection from all kinds of weather (winter winds, summer heat and rain). They can be enclosed in a shed or moved around and placed in the shade of trees. The ideal arrangement should allow some sunlight in for the rabbits if they choose it. The hutches must also provide protection from pred-



Hutches need to be secure from predators and give weather protection. An enclosed area for daily exercise is highly desirable.

ators such as dogs, cats, rats and snakes.

Ventilation

Ammonia and moisture must be adequately removed from the atmosphere. Moisture creates a humid environment which increases the amount of ammonia (from rabbit urine) in the atmosphere and provides a breeding ground for bacteria. If the smell of ammonia is obvious to humans, then it is detrimental to the rabbits.

Temperature

The ideal temperature is between 10 and 25 degrees Celsius. At low temperatures the food consumed is used to maintain body heat. A higher temperature means that less food is consumed and so productivity and growth rates are reduced.

BREEDING

A doe should be at least five to six months and a buck six to seven months old before mating. Does are inclined to be territorial, so it is important to

always take them to the male. Fertilisation takes place eight to ten hours after mating. The pregnancy lasts for 32 days (sometimes a day either side). A nest box and a supply of hay should be placed in the cage two to three days before her due date. As the birth becomes closer the doe will pluck hair from her chest, shoulders and sides to line the nest.

Frequently, does give birth to a larger number of young than they can nurse (up to 18). Fortunately, rabbits accept fosters easily (up to two weeks difference in age). As does grow older they have a tendency to give birth to litters containing fewer young. Providing such a doe is in good physical condition, with good milk yield, she can be an excellent foster mother.

The kits (baby rabbits) grow very fast and start to open their eyes on about the tenth day. When they're about three weeks old they start to venture out of the nest and nibble on solid food.

After five to six weeks the doe will start to wean them.

FOOD AND WATER

It is essential to have a clean supply of fresh water available at all times. Consumption will vary according to the type of feed and climatic conditions and increases when the doe is lactating. The best system is an automatic one fitted with a nipple. These are available from pet shops or rural stores.

A lactating doe will eat up to three times her normal ration. Rabbits have small stomachs, which are emptied into very long intestines only as new food enters. This is why rabbits consume only small quantities at a time and must be fed regularly to avoid digestive upsets.

Commercial rabbit feed in the form of pellets is available, but I prefer to choose a natural diet from plants grown at home. Although this is more time consuming and weight is not put on as fast as with a pellet diet, I know I am getting a cleaner, healthier end product. Additional benefits include keeping the animals robust and less susceptible to disease.

It is essential for the rabbits to have enough protein, vitamins, minerals and roughage included in their diet. The more variety given, the more likely it will meet their needs. In areas where the soil is deficient in certain mineral elements, the plants grown on that soil can have the same mineral deficiency, so where livestock producers feed a mineralised salt to other farm animals, the same kind of salt can be included in the rabbit ration.

Some of the plants we feed to our

rabbits (other than the normal vegetables from the garden and orchard) are: leaves and small branches from pigeon pea, leucaena, mulberry, fruit trees, paulownia, pineapple sage, arrowroot, nasturtium, sweet potato, lablab, tomato leaves and chokos. Other plants include weeds such as milk thistle, glossy nightshade, farmer's friends and dock (before flowering). They also love kikuyu and a variety of garden flowers. Some medicinal herbs they like are tansy, wormwood, dandelion and garlic chives. Other feeds that are bought and used sparingly (to reduce costs and unknown chemical uptake) if I'm late home and have to feed in the dark, are lucerne, and mixed grains, though not dried corn. Provided rabbits are not starved they will let you know their likes and dislikes, so don't be afraid to experiment.

CANNIBALISM

If young rabbits are found with their feet chewed off, partially consumed carcasses are found in the hutch or kits are missing altogether, the doe could be suspected of cannibalism. This is rarely the case and the culprit is more likely to have been a rat, cat, snake or other animal. Even if blood is found on her nose, she should not be condemned because it is natural for her to lick any wounds to assist in healing. If there is no doubt that the doe is actually eating her young, in most cases it will be due to an abnormal appetite caused by the feed ration being inadequate in quality or quantity, or due to the doe being nervous because she has been disturbed following kindling. A valuable doe that destroys her first litter should

be given a second chance, but if she continues the practice she should be disposed of.

MANURE

Rabbit manure is a valuable by-product, and is best applied directly to the soil to avoid loss of fertility. If stock are fed a well balanced diet, their droppings have a high nitrogen content and are safe to use on plants immediately as they will not burn them. An alternative to this is to have a worm farm under the cages to convert droppings to casts, which are then applied to plants. This makes the nutrients readily available to plants when applied. If a large population of worms is maintained, odours do not develop and flies do not propagate.

Rabbits practise coprophagy (the consuming of some of their droppings). Two kinds of pellets are passed – one is the familiar large, firm 'day' pellet and the other a 'night' pellet that is small, soft and coated with mucus. The rabbit turns this latter pellet over in its mouth several times, then swallows it whole. Eating these night pellets is not an indication of a deficiency in the feed ration, but a provision by nature to enable the rabbit to obtain the maximum amount of nutrients from its feed.

Squeamish readers need read no further.

PREPARING FOR TABLE

After twelve weeks comes the hardest part of preparing your rabbits for the table. This could be the turning point for some people to become vegetarians. It is a time to honour and give thanks and appreciation to the rabbit



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COOKING RABBIT

Mother's Methods

by Ken Woods, Shoreham, Vic.

When I was a boy the whole family enjoyed eating freshly caught rabbit cooked in one of my mother's special recipes. Those were the days before myxo, of course. Here are a few of her methods.

Take up your freshly dead rabbit, neatly gut and skin, wipe the rabbit clean and dry it. Please, if you use a 12-gauge to get rabbits, make sure you pick out every lead pellet. Refrigerate for about three days.

Prior to cooking, soak in salty water for about one hour. Drain, wipe dry and season. Use a handful of breadcrumbs for seasoning, with a small knob of butter rubbed through the crumbs, and about a dessertspoon of thyme or other herbs for flavour. Moisten the seasoning with some lemon juice and place in the body cavity to capacity. Draw front and rear legs together and tie securely. Put the rabbit into a baking dish and into a medium oven. For a spot of luxury eating, when the rabbit is well-browned on both sides, take it from the oven and wrap it with some well-smoked and honey-cured bacon. Skewer the bacon to the rabbit with long toothpicks. Return to oven and complete baking.

Mother's other method was to disjoint the rabbit, soak the pieces in salty water, then dry and cook them in water



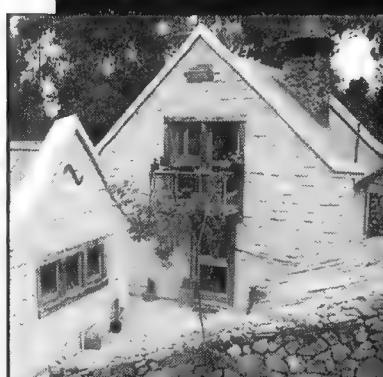
on the back of the Lux fire stove. In later years they were cooked in the pressure cooker until tender. The rabbit pieces were covered with a white sauce, liberally mixed with plenty of finely diced parsley, or alternatively, with a curried white sauce.

Aside from the rabbits, we often brought home hares. After we boys boned the carcass Mother would put the flesh through the mincer with the addition of about a quarter of its weight in the aforementioned bacon.

Then, with breadcrumbs, minced onion and herbs all well mixed in, Mother would make hare patties. Today I think they would be called 'burgers' of some sort. 

INACTIVITY AND WEIGHT

It is estimated that inactivity and overweight and obesity together account for about 40 percent of the total burden of disease in Australia.



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Simple Seedling Propagation

by George Ainsley, Matrise Tree Farms.

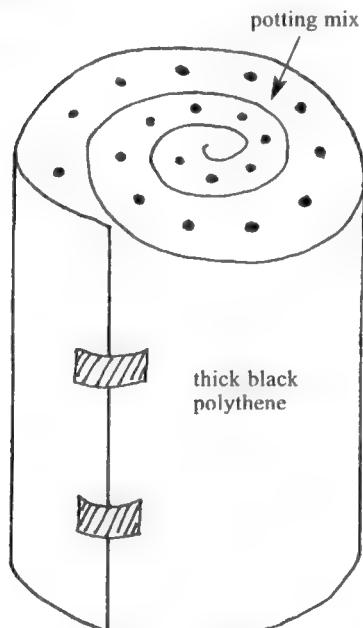
In our nursery operation, time constraints obliged us to develop a method for rapid, simple and cheap propagation and growing-on of large numbers of seedlings. We grow neem and other speciality crop tree seedlings up to the planting-out stage.

The technique we evolved we call the 'swiss roll method'. You end up with evenly spaced seedlings set in the layers of a large spiral, where the 'cake' in the swiss roll is made up of potting mix, and the 'jam' is made up of a long strip of thick black polythene, which forms the equivalent of plant-bag walls (figure 1).

SETTING UP A SYSTEM

- Acquire a roll of heavy black polythene.
- Decide how long you want the root system of your seedlings (say 250 millimetres).
- Cut the polythene roll to the root length wanted.
- Decide how long you want the polythene (eg if you want to have 50 seedlings spaced 25 millimetres apart,

Figure 1



plus 150 millimetre overlap, plus a little bit on the other end, you need about 1.5 metres).

- Take two wooden planks, 25 millimetres thick, and nail onto a wooden table at a separation of 250 millimetres (figure 2)

- Put the polythene strip in the track between the planks (250 millimetres x 1.5 metres).

- Fill the track with potting mix to the height of the boards (25 millimetres).

- Mark 50 seedling positions, 25 millimetres apart, on one plank (figure 2).

- Place germinated seeds or small seedlings on the potting mix at the positions marked.

- Remove boards and fold back the 150-millimetre overlap over the placed seedlings.

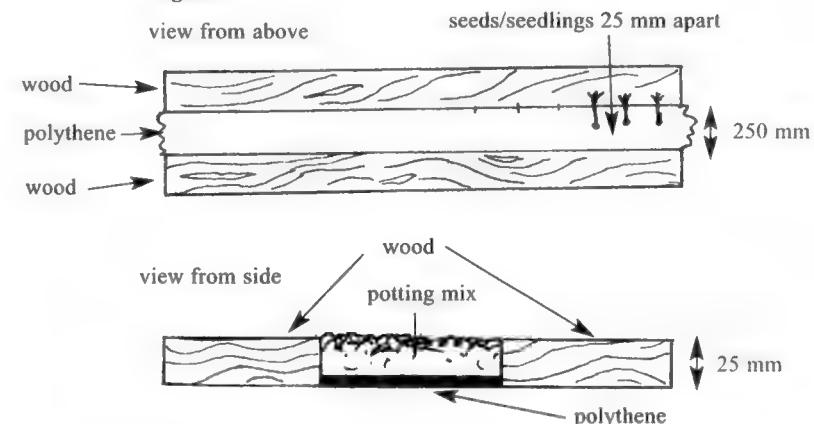
- Roll up the set of seedlings into a 'swiss roll' and secure the end with plastic tape.

- Completed rolls can be placed in a metal tray or polythene liner and watered by filling the tray up to a depth of 12 millimetres.

This system was devised by Bryan Yates of Western Bonsai who acts as our nursery supervisor.

Reprinted from *Quandong*, Vol 28, No 4, the magazine of the Western Australian Nut and Tree Crop Association (Inc). For enquiries contact: PO Box 565, Subiaco 6008.

Figure 2



The Australian Greenhouse Office and the Institute for Sustainable Futures have come up with *Your Home*, an invaluable package for anyone who wants an energy efficient home. The three-part package comes in climate-specific state editions and includes a technical manual and sourcing guide. The magazine and manual can be downloaded free, or the printed form is available for \$49.50. Phone 1300-130-606, or visit www.greenhouse.gov.au and follow the prompts to 'Your Home'. ☀

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WHAT'S ON

Don't think that mellow autumn means you can relax, there are field days, courses and festivals all over Australia that sound too good to miss.

COTTON ON

The Australian Cotton Fibre Expo is on 10 to 18 May this year at Narrabri, NSW. For information, mail enquiry to PO Box 156, Narrabri 2390, or visit www.ceinternet.com.au/~cotfibre

WA ORGANIC CONFERENCE

The inaugural WA Organic and Biodynamic Conference will be held on 6 and 7 June 2003 at the Mandurah Performing Arts Centre, one hour from Perth. The theme is 'Beyond Clean and Green - Organic WA' and it's sponsored by the Organic Growers Association. Day one will feature speakers, discussion, trade show and conference dinner, and day two tours to regional organic farms. If interested, contact Shirley Goode, ph: 08-9535-2876, or email: info@meetingmasters.com.au

PERMACULTURE INTERNSHIPS

Like to get your hands dirty? Why not visit award-winning Crystal Waters Permaculture Village for a certificate internship in ecovillage and permaculture design? Presented by Max Lindegger and running for four days a week from 14 April to 12 May, this course is limited to 12 participants and has both practical and theoretical components. Ph: 07-5494-4741, or visit www.crystalwaterscollege.com.au

MUDGEES FARM FIELD DAYS

The Mudgee Small Farm Field Days are being held on 18 and 19 July 2003. Attend one of over 300 lectures on topics like organics, natural resource management, agronomy and more. Call the Rural Education Centre on 02-6372-3899, website: hwy.com.au/~arec/

JAZZY GARDEN FESTIVAL

One of Australia's most historic grazing properties, Lanyon Homestead in Tharwa, is the host for ACT's Lanyon Garden Festival. There will be food, wine, jazz, cooking and gardening demonstrations, stalls, animals and of course the lovely gardens and orchards of Lanyon in autumn. On from 5 to 6 April, cost \$7. Ph: 02-6237-5136, or email: Lanyon.Homestead@act.gov.au

BD LOCAL TO TOCAL

Hunter Biodynamic Group (HBG) will be joining with like-minded groups in the Tocal area to present a BD/organic/sustainable view of agriculture and gardening. This HBG Education Project is on 2 to 4 May at the Tocal Small Farms Field Days. Contact HBG on 02-4938-5347.

NZ ECO BUILDING WORKSHOPS

Adobe South in Whangarei, NZ, is conducting a series of workshops; Introduction to Earth Building runs from 12 to 13 April and Introduction to Strawbale from 17 to 18 May. Ph/fax: +64-9430-2020 or visit their website www.adobesouth.co.nz for details.

PRESERVE ME!

Learn how to preserve olives, chestnuts, and quinces, and make wine, jam, herb vinegar and lavender water at the Swiss-Italian Autumn Harvest Festival at Lavendula Lavender Farm. There's also seed saving, chooks and plants, and Italian music and dancing. Entry \$3, Sunday 4 May, Newstead Rd, near Daylesford, Vic. Ph: 03-5476-4393, or visit www.lavendula.com.au for details.

BIODYNAMIC BUS TOUR

Fifteen innovative and successful organic and biodynamic farms will showcase sheep, cattle, grain, olives, vines, bush tucker, poultry and more for 18 lucky tour participants. The travelling workshop will run for 10 days beginning on Friday 16 May. If interested in a comprehensive training in organic and biodynamic farming contact Cheryl Kemp on 02-6657-5322.

FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW

Innovative designs like the Gardens for a Dry Climate series will be on display at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show, Carlton Gardens, from 2 to 6 April 2003. Entry is \$17.50. For details ph: 13-12-86, or email: info@melbflowershow.com.au

FREE BD WEEKEND

Learn how to make the various BD preparations in a workshop with Biodynamic Agriculture Australia on 5 and 6 April 2003 at Dorrigo, NSW. BYO lunch to share. Ph: 02-6655-0566. ¶



BEEN WITH US SINCE ISSUE NUMBER ONE?

It's nearly 30 years since *Grass Roots* began publication. To help us commemorate this important milestone, we'd be thrilled if anyone who has been reading GR since that first inspiring issue would contact us.

Don't be shy, ring Megg or Mary on 03-5792-4000.
We want to hear from you.



SIMPLE BUSH STOVES

by Dianne Jackson, Valhalla.

We've lived and worked in many places throughout Australia over the years. Being lovers of wholesome tucker and independence from that supermarket excuse called bread, we usually use a camp oven, or improvise, so we can bake fresh bread. So whenever we set up a semi-permanent camp and expect to stay a month or more, we scout around for suitable materials to build an oven and stove.

Here are some of the many ovens we've built and left for others to use in Western Australia, New South Wales and Queensland.

We were camped on the Central Queensland Gemfields when heavy rain washed out the only road. Forced to sit in one place some distance from town and bakery, we decided to make a cooking area and stove. Rounded quartzite rocks, locally known as 'billy boulders', surrounded us in their millions, so we built a U-shape similar to the bush oven described below. A 50-litre drum became the oven and a goldpan the makeshift oven door, propped closed with a stick.

A SUFFICIENCY OF STOVES

Bush Stove at Poona

To build this one at Poona in Western Australia we used a metal chopper – a strong steel blade with a sturdy wooden handle. The back of the blade is struck with a hammer to quickly and safely cut steel objects. You can buy a chopper from hardware shops. A 200-litre drum is ideal for the oven. It doesn't matter if the sides are a bit rusty.

Use the chopper and hammer to remove about two-thirds of the top, leaving enough at the back to fit a chimney. A steel barbecue plate, large enough to cover the exposed drum top, is the cooking surface. We have an old 'fish plate', used by the railways when joining two lengths of railway line. Not only is it an excellent fit, its thickness ensures that chops and sausages never burn.

Downpipe will work for a chimney,



Above: A bush stove we set up in delightful surroundings at Poona, WA.

Below: The drum stove we built at Maytown, Qld, with pots simmering on metal washers on the cookplate.

but its solder melts during use so it must be riveted together or secured with wire along its length. We prefer a narrow sheet of iron bent to shape. Make four vertical 10-centimetre cuts at the base of the chimney and bend these flaps outwards, then fit securely with rivets or bolts onto the chimney opening cut in the drum.

Chop out an opening for a firebox about 10 centimetres below the top rim, down to the first ridge (as in the photo left). The base of the firebox is filled with rocks and dirt. If possible, top with sand to the level of the opening. For camp oven use, remove the steel plate and get a good fire going. Sit camp oven on the hot bed of sand, lay hot coals on the lid and up the sides of the oven.

A suitable flat rock is a makeshift damper. Slide across the chimney top to regulate the draught. The longer the chimney, the better the draught, the hotter the fire.

Bush Stove at Maytown

This was another drum stove, but with easier access for a camp oven to burn



larger wood. We built this one in North Queensland, out near Maytown. Many delicious meals were cooked on this excellent stove.

A 200-litre drum laid on its side was cut open about one-third the way down, leaving the back quarter for the chimney (see photo previous page). A thick steel plate was placed to the front and a piece of mesh at the back spanned the gap. We cut a suitable chimney hole, triangular in section, just a rectangle of iron bent and riveted to suit.

We supported the drum on rocks and dirt to a suitable height. Fortunately, we found a large squarish boulder just right for a worktable and built the stove against it. The drum base was filled with rocks and soil to make a firebed.

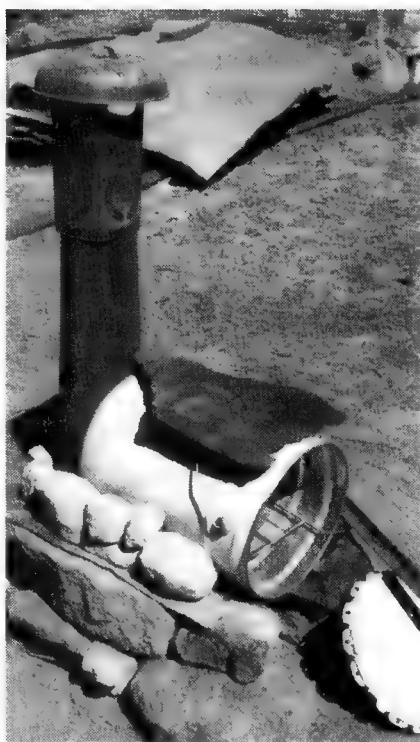
Clayish mud can be used as mortar to smarten up the rock supports. This can continue up the sides of the drum to give a flat area along the top edges.

The advantage of this stove is that cooking is done from the side so the cook is shielded from most of the heat. To use the camp oven, remove the steel plate and mesh, rake an area clean of coals, then heap coals over the camp oven as described above.

Another useful idea was several thick metal washers placed on the cookplate under a pot. This allows food to simmer or stay warm without burning, free from flies and ants.

Bush Oven

During a camping trip in far northern New South Wales we improvised this quick and useful oven. Fish shops discard cooking oil drums with push-on metal lids. These make a quick outdoor



The quick and useful bush oven under construction and awaiting mud plaster.

oven. If the drum has a plastic drain plug, replace with a metal one. Thoroughly clean drum with hot water and detergent. You'll need a small sheet of old iron for the base. Make or arrange a chimney as before.

First build the firebox, just a U-shape of stones to support your drum on its side about 30 centimetres off the ground. Lay iron sheet across these rocks. This iron prevents the drum oven burning out too quickly. Lay drum on its side, resting on the iron. Build up each side with stone and mud

mortar. The chimney rests on stones against the back of the oil drum with rocks and mud securing it in place. Keep building up the sides with rocks and clayey mud to the top of the drum.

Leave the drum opening exposed so the lid fits. Build up mud across top of stove and push into place a large flat stone to create a warming surface. Continue plastering mud to enclose the chimney base (see photo of reconstructed oven ready for mud plaster, left).

Leave overnight. Next day keep a small fire of sticks and leaves going so the mud dries out slowly. Plaster more mud over any cracks. Soon the oven is ready to use.

In this oven I used a shelf from an old electric oven or a cake cooler. This rests within the drum about one-third the way up.

Fire up your oven. Sprinkle some flour on an old dish and put in oven. When flour browns the oven is ready to cook. The oil drum lid is pushed on and held secure with a prop.

Old Fuel Stove

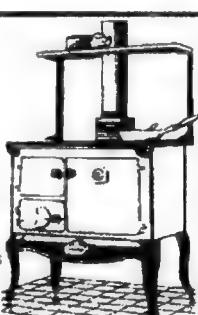
For a permanent camp and barbecue area we used an old fuel stove set up on rocks and mudbricks. This gave us an instant cooktop with oven and became a friendly cosy gathering place.

These old stoves are readily found in country areas. Carefully remove all loose parts and contained soot before travel. The stove can be easily moved into position if eased onto rollers. Never fully enclose around fuel stoves because they tend to burn out the sides.

It's a good idea to arrange a shelter with a weatherproof roof over a fuel stove because it quickly rusts out if left in the weather.

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Left: This old fuel stove has been permanently installed on rocks and mudbricks in an adobe shelter.

To move between camps we carry our barbecue steel plate and mesh amply wrapped in newspapers inside a strong hessian bag.

It's a good idea to collect adequate fire-starting material and firewood to store under cover for the next day

SAFETY FIRST

- Never, ever, cut a drum formerly used for fuel with a welding torch, power cutter or grinder. A single spark can explode to maim and kill.

- It isn't a good idea to use river stones for a fireplace. During their long travels these rocks collect fine cracks which contain moisture. In a fire, the water turns to steam and the stones explode. Likewise, obviously mineralised stone is a no-no. They usually carry poisonous minerals that could release toxic fumes upon heating.

- To make these stoves always wear safety glasses and gloves.

- Of course, any outdoor fireplaces must be made safe with a cleared fire-break surround.

- Always ensure that all fires are banked and made safe from evening winds. Keep a full water bucket handy.

- If a camp is to be left unattended, dig a suitable hole to bury all hot ashes and coals. This is especially necessary in country prone to willy-willies, cock-eyed bobs or dust devils (depending on where you are in Australia).

- Remember, you are not allowed to use outdoor stoves during fire-prone times. *

Hibachi

A hibachi is a small, Japanese twig-fed cooker with a metal grid. It's quick to heat up and easy to make and transport if necessary. We made one in a quarter of an hour from scrap materials. The basic need is for a small grid of metal rods or a shelf from an oven. A square metal container is handy for the firebox, the bottom of which is filled with stones and topped with sand.

Traditionally, hibachis are used for quick heating or light cooking with only a small quantity of fuel/sticks used. They are ideal for short stops when quick water heating for beverages, or small meals such as shish kebabs, sausages, bacon and toast, are required.

An always popular sweet is a

'sausage' of light bread mix moulded around a greased stick or metal rod and cooked on the hibachi. Condensed milk is dribbled into the centre of the bread for a quick dessert.

ESSENTIAL TOOLS

For successful camp cooking you need pot mitts, a scraper for the steel plate, a strong meat hook to lift the camp oven lid, a sturdy barbecue set of long-handled flippers, long tongs and a toasting fork. Have handy a shovel, all-metal rake and work gloves, matches, cigarette lighter, torch and camp light off your 12-volt vehicle socket. We also have a battery-operated head lamp that is very useful for hands-free operations.

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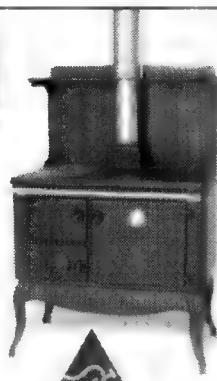
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AUSTRALIAN MADE

Laundry Buggy

by Cherry Neilson, Tiaro, Qld.

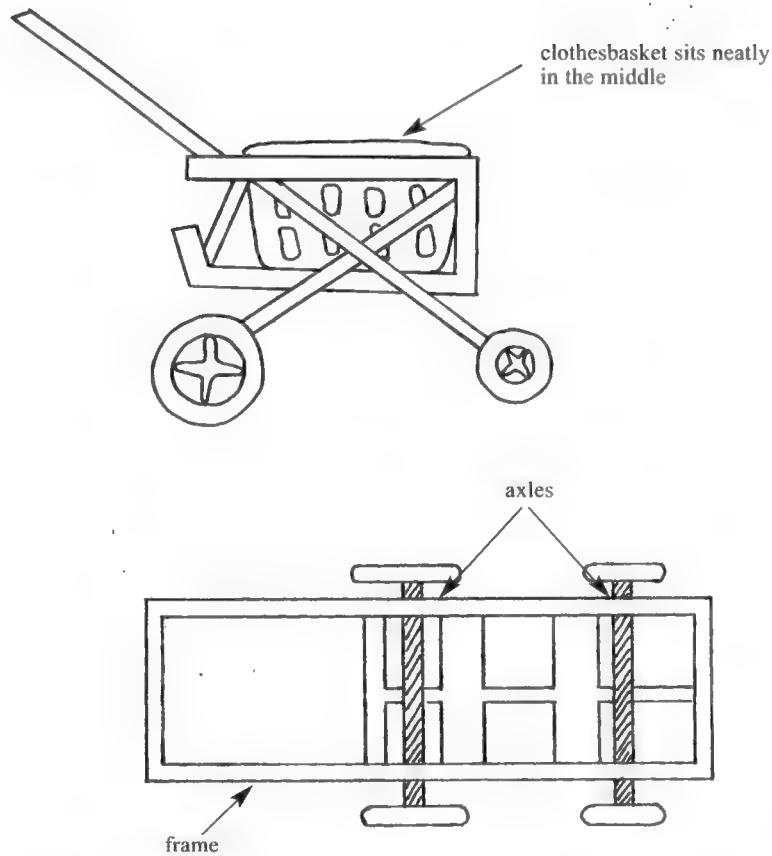
The laundry buggy came into being one day when I was carrying a heavy tub of washing and needed a convenient place to rest it. The old pram was sitting nearby so I placed the load in it. Hey presto, the laundry buggy was born, followed closely by the paddock pusher.

I once had an accident when a conventional laundry trolley folded up under me; I was 34 weeks pregnant at the time and took a bad tumble. It wasn't the first time I had hurt myself on the trolley so I'd carried my washing to the line ever since, until, that is, the idea of the buggy came to me.

After finding out how easy the buggy was to use, I sent it to the shed with hubby for a few modifications. A bar was added to the back so the tub wouldn't slip back, a new wheel, some welding here and there and a little rust protection and the job was done.

The old style of pram frame is best, because they wheel more easily over rough patches than the newer ones. I was raising a large family so I had a couple of them. Perhaps the local tip vendor might have some. An old freezer basket fits them well, as does a 45-litre tall tub or a 42- by 36-centimetre rectangular tub.

To make the perfect paddock pusher for the kids to fetch things in, hubby welded a strong mesh basket onto one old frame. The kids have had a lot of fun with it, collecting such things as



cow feed, grass clippings, firewood and anything the imagination could think of, including the youngest child and Zoro the dog, who thoroughly enjoyed each escapade. Most of the children

have left home now, but the laundry buggy and the paddock pusher are still going strong. Although they are the amusement of all who call, I would never trade them for new ones. ¶

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Brown Egg Layers

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

If you like a brown-shelled egg, you have to turn to the Barnevelder or Welsummer, two pure breeds that originated in the Netherlands. Some of the new commercial laying strains produce a very dark eggshell, but many people today are interested in conserving old varieties of fruit trees and garden plants and so look to purebred fowls to complement that philosophy.

It is a pleasure to write about the Barnie and Wellie, as they're affectionately known, because they are excellent backyard or small farm birds. In the main they are sensible hardworking fowls. I use 'in the main' because considerable variation exists between strains within both breeds, so slightly scatty specimens can be found as well as placid, even-natured examples. Roosters combine an attractive plumage with a caring personality that almost never extends to overprotectiveness and hostility. And there's more! Broodiness is rare in both breeds and, on the infrequent occasions a hen goes broody, she is easily persuaded to drop ideas of motherhood and to return to the flock, and laying.

The popularity of these breeds goes up and down. Barnies enjoy a small following among fanciers and can often be seen on the show bench. Wellies are less commonly seen at shows, possibly because they're judged on utility properties as well as looks and this has less appeal to exhibitors.

If, as a result of this coverage, you're inspired to seek out one of the Dutch breeds, you're best to look for stock that is bred for egg laying and not exhibition. Of course you want good specimens of the breed, but you can't have perfect feather markings and a high egg output. Be prepared to contact local organic and permaculture groups or put signs up in the local library or produce store. The birds are out there on farms and in backyards, it's just a matter of making contact.



BARNEVELDER

The spectacular appearance of Barnies scratching around in green grass attracts new owners as much as the appeal of the deep brown egg. Black and brown plumage colour has a noticeable lustre and is complemented by the red comb and wattles and the deep yellow legs. Add to this the friendly nature of the breed and a sale is easily made.

Barnies were developed from local Dutch fowl crossed with Croad Langshan, Brahma, Cochin and other popular breeds. The combination resulted in a hardy vigorous layer that produced a coffee coloured eggshell. A lucrative market in England for brown breakfast eggs boosted the breed as well as Dutch coffers.

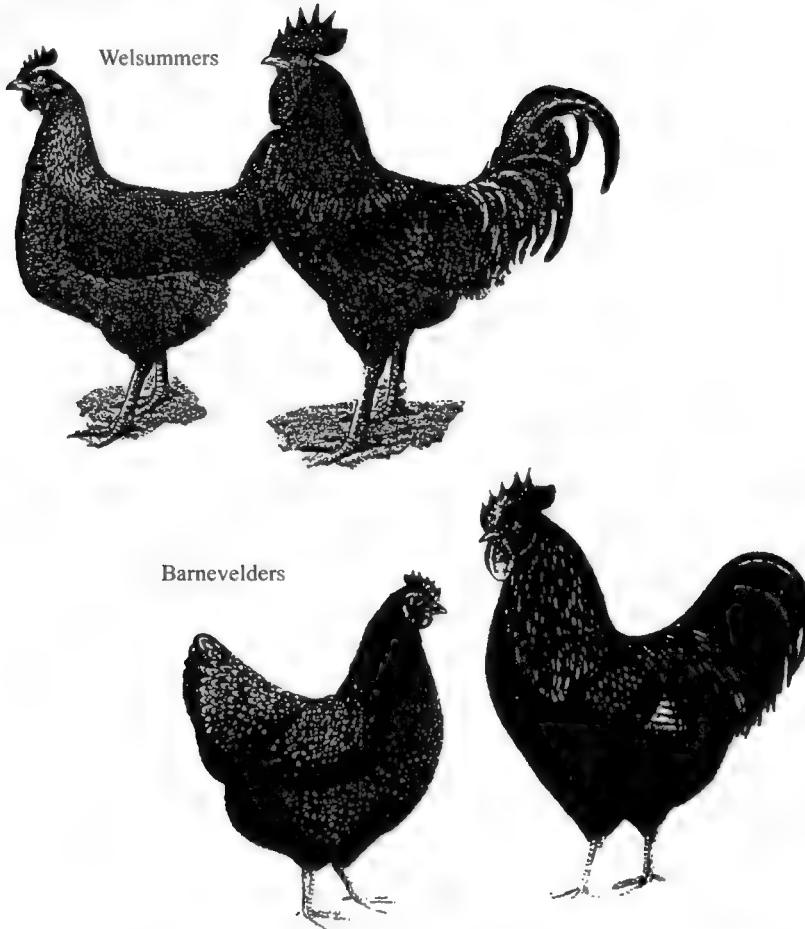
Barnies are classed a heavy breed, so expect weights of about 3.20 – 3.60 kilograms for roosters, 2.70 – 3.20 kilograms for hens, 2.70 – 3.20 kilograms for cockerels and 2 – 2.5 kilograms for pullets. There is a tendency for birds to fall far short of these, but the breed is considered an 'all-rounder', which means males can be finished for the table so shouldn't be undersized.

The breed has a distinct shape – an upright carriage, broad breast, full neck and a concave backline that

sweeps up to the tail, which is carried high. Colour varieties include Black, Double-laced and Partridge, and, very rarely, Blue-laced and White. Double-laced is the variety usually sought. Hens have a red-brown ground colour, each feather edged in black with a second, internal, line of lacing a few millimetres from the first. The neck hackle is green-black. The male's neck hackle is black with red-brown edging, the breast and back are red-brown with black lacing and the abdomen is black, as are the main tail feathers and hangars. Eyes on both sexes are orange, and legs and feet yellow.

This breed is kept largely for the dark eggshell. Eggs vary in the shade of brown, some hens producing a coffee coloured shell and others a light brown. Speckling on eggs isn't unusual. Be aware that the first eggs for the season will be richly coloured, but as the period of lay goes on it is natural for the degree of pigment deposited on the shell to drop off so that the eggs laid just before moulting will be noticeably pale. The brown colour is pigment, laid down in the final stages of egg production. If you rub it, it will come off. If hens are producing shells that seem to be lightening in each generation of pullets that are hatched, you

Brown Egg Layers



can breed and select to improve the colour. *Australasian Poultry* magazine has featured articles on this process.

Any criticisms of the breed? Indian Game has been introduced into some strains to improve the feather lacing. The legacy is a cobbier bird, a flatter back and a smaller, rounder egg. The other point to be aware of is that Barnies are not highly resistant to Marek's disease, so keep this in mind when buying and introducing new stock.

WELSUMMER

Welsummers are also eye catching and it's often said they resemble the archetypal brown farmyard fowl of children's books. Few roosters equal the Wellie for colour and the hens are attractive, motherly looking birds.

They originated in a different part of the Netherlands to Barnies and are named after the village Welsum. Native local fowl were infused with Barnevelder and those breeds used to

create it, plus Rhode Island Red and Partridge varieties of Wyandotte and Leghorn. Few pure breeds have the vigour displayed by Welsummers.

Curiously, they have been classed a light breed, but much of the time examples of the breed are weightier than Barnevelders, which are categorised a heavy breed. Anticipate weights of 3.20 kilograms for roosters, 2.70 kilograms for hens, 2.70 kilograms for cockerels and 2.00 – 2.25 kilograms for pullets.

Wellies are upright strong-looking birds. They have a full rounded breast, long broad back and deep wide abdomen. The back is straight and the tail carried high. Like the Barnie, they have red ear lobes, a medium-sized upright comb and wattles, and clean feather-free legs. Partridge is the common colour; overseas they also come in silver duckwing.

Males have a rich golden-brown head, neck hackle and saddle; a black

breast with red mottling; a rich red-brown back, shoulders and wingbow; and a black wingbar and tail. The black has a lustrous green shine. The females have a golden-brown head and neck; the latter striped with black, and a chestnut-red breast, darkening to brown at the abdomen. The back and wingbow are red-brown with black stippling, the feather shaft a lighter red, and the tail is black with a fine brown edging. Eyes for both sexes are red, the beak is yellow or horn and legs and feet rich yellow.

Wellie hens lay large eggs, the size increasing with age. They lay for years – six- and seven-year-olds will still pay their way with eggs. Colour of shells is disappointing, with just a few strains producing the terracotta-brown associated with the breed. This needs improving, but the good egg size and output, plus the fact many hens produce dark speckles on their shells, excuses this shortcoming.

Criticisms of Welsummers include the absence of the deep brown pigmented shells, the tendency of the breed to a larger, heavier body weight, and the difficulties encountered with Wellie chicks when run with chicks of other breeds. Wellies grow so quickly they become bossy and bully slower growing chicks.

NOTABLE FEATURES

Both breeds are excellent foragers and not prone to flying over fences. If penned with food in front of them and insufficient activity, they eat to compensate, get fat and lay poorly.

The young of both breeds can be gender identified as they produce chicks with striped down. With striped chicks the markings on females are darker and more clearly defined than on males, where they're blurred and redder coloured. Also, the eye strip is stronger and clearer on females than on males. Later, when chicks are around a month old, the males are easy to distinguish because they are slower to feather up and have sparse feathering on the shoulders and back and very short tails.

Beauty and utility sums up both breeds, and, with their placidity and cooperative nature, this makes them a top candidate for families or people who want a minimum-fuss fowl. ♀

RECYCLING RUNS RIOT

Tyre House Walls

by Roberino, Arrawarra Beach, NSW.

You've made tanks, kennels, chairs and planters with old tyres, now try a house!

In yet another use for those old tyres . . . a New Mexico architect/builder, Michael Reynolds, has invented a cheap wall building method using old car tyres. Anyone wanting to try this in Australia would need to get building approval from the local council's building inspector first – stamped plans – the full Monty, because we all know what our bureaucrats think of new ideas. You know the old story, unless the building method has been used for poofteen million years. Well . . . the rats and bandicoots might eat the tyres and the house would fall down and everyone would sue' the council. That it's been used overseas for years just doesn't cut the mustard here.

The tyre walls are used in much the same way as cob or strawbale walls. Suitable footings – a raft concrete slab is probably the easiest to be accepted – are poured first. The first row of tyres is laid down on the foots (slab) OOOOOOOO, tread to tread. The tyres are filled with dirt and compacted by tamping with a Kanga electric jack hammer and a suitable tamping accessory tool. A typical tyre will hold about 130 kilograms of dirt and you'd best experiment a bit to see if the dirt on your property hangs in there enough. Clay or clay-shale is probably the best.

To begin the next course of tyres, bond the second row stretcher-bond fashion, alternating the rows, tamping dirt into them as you proceed upwards, using about eight rows in height, but this will depend on the tyres you use.

When the wall is fully stabilised with earth, you then mud render or concrete spray just as you would for a strawbale wall. This really consolidates the wall and seals in any rubber smells and fireproofs the tyres. The



council will demand a minimum cover of the render over the tyres. A pleasing pattern is achieved by the sprayed concrete method. All electric wiring and water pipes are fastened to the tyres before rendering.

Although probably cyclone proof and more stable than conventional brick walls, it might be easier to get approved by council if some conventional building material is used as the load-bearing medium, similar to a mudbrick or adobe house or a metal-framed hayshed/machinery shed, and the tyres used as infill nonloadbearing walls. Door and window frames are built in as you proceed with the tyre walls – as in conventional brick walls.

A variation on the dirt filling of tyres is slightly moist clay and cement dust. If you use mud render, it's a good idea to incorporate some cement to prevent heavy rain washing it off, or a one-metre roof overhang as rain protection.

There is probably enough cushioning in the tyre wall to make it very suitable in earthquake zones, and, of course, it would be quite bushfire proof. Traditional timber or brick veneer houses have lots of timber in inaccessible places, which is fatal if sparks get into cavities or nooks and crannies. ¶

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Home Brew

Two For The Price Of One

by Lyn Mason, Townsville, Qld.

Reading 'Lazy Home Brewing' in GRs 144 and 150 has prompted me to tell everyone how I get two brews for the price of one.

You will need two fermenters, two kilograms white sugar, a tin of home brew and one extra packet of yeast. I buy the cheapest home brew (supermarket brand) for \$7.06, sugar about \$2.00 and yeast about \$1.50 per packet. So, for \$10.56 I get 48 litres of brew. That's about the price of a six-pack at the bottle shop. We have tried different flavours of home brew, but we like draught the best, so I don't ever think of using anything else. I also make a sparkling wine using 100 percent fruit juice from the supermarket with an Oz Tops kit from the home brew shop.

To make, put two litres of boiling water in each fermenter and dissolve one kilogram white sugar in each. Then weigh the tin of home brew and put half into each fermenter with another two litres of hot water each, using some of this water to rinse out the tin. Stir each to dissolve. Now fill each with tap water, add one packet of yeast to each and stir. Then put the lids on and insert the air locks. Allow to ferment for a week.

Sometimes one will bubble and the

other one does not; don't worry. I put this down to using different yeasts. I have had one bubble out through the air lock onto the top of the lid. If this happens, wipe all excess from the lid, rinse the cloth thoroughly and wipe again, before removing the air lock to rinse and replace.

If I make up my brew on a Saturday, I can be sure that it will be ready to bottle on the following Saturday. Very rarely has it still been bubbling after a week. But if yours is, don't worry, it will soon settle down.

I use plastic soft drink bottles to put my brew into. Put half a teaspoon of white sugar into 390-millilitre bottles and a heaped half teaspoon of white sugar into 600-millilitre bottles. Fill with brew, screw on lid and give a good shake. I use half a squash ball to tighten the lids (they must be tight). I have no idea what the alcohol content of this brew is, but I am sure it is not as strong as when I used one tin of home brew in one fermenter with 750 grams of sugar.

I changed from glass to plastic bottles when we launched our boat *M V Lauriana*, after 10 years of rebuilding her. I had had a few glass bottles explode over the years and did not want this mess on the boat. I have used all sizes of soft drink bottles, from the largest to the smallest, and all work well. But we settled for the 390-millilitre and the 600-millilitre because they fit 20 into the plastic cubes that you can buy from the cheapy shops or supermarkets. As we live aboard, everything has to be compact. The smaller bottles are also easier to transport in cooler bags (with half a squash ball to open them) when we are invited to other boats for happy hour or sundowners.

We have used water from different places from Townsville to Tin Can Bay and back again, as well as rainwater caught from the cabin tops on the boat,



and it has all worked out fine.

I am really pleased with the soft drink bottles because we are using something that is usually thrown away. I could cry when I see all the bottles beside the highway or floating in the sea.

HOME BREW HINTS

- Keep all home brew utensils for home brew only.
- When you purchase your home brew always lift the lid to ensure you do have the yeast there.
- Try to keep at least two and a half brews ahead so you are not drinking green brew.
- Always purchase extra yeast when you see it because some supermarkets do not sell it.
- Cut the rings from the neck of the bottles, this makes them easier to clean and sterilise.
- Use a knife with a sharp point to flick the plastic seal out of the lid to wash and sterilise them properly then rinse and replace the seal.
- Do not use water or sports drink bottles; the larger lids on the latter do not seem to seal properly.

If anyone has any questions about any of the brew I'd be happy to answer them. Please send a self-addressed stamped envelope though as funds are tight. Lyn Mason, *M V Lauriana*, PO Box 229, Townsville 4810.

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TASSIE MOVES A STEP CLOSER

Selling

by Sherrian O'Connor, Spreyton, Tas.

About fifteen months out from our prospective move (see GR 155) we started making serious enquiries about selling. Don't ever believe anyone who tells you selling your house is easy. It's not. It's scary and it hurts! Hurts because of all of yourself that's in the house. Your memories, good and bad, kids you've raised, gardens you've made, disasters you've had, triumphs and tragedies - all weave themselves into the fabric of a house. The happier and more comfortable your house feels the harder it will be.

The scary part is wondering if you're making the right decisions. Sometimes there is no choice. We couldn't afford to stay put on a retirement income and it was time to retire while still able to set ourselves up for 'peaceful old age'. So, the 'sell' part of the decision was okay, but how and at what price? Agent or self-sell? Auction or private sale? Gather the information. Panic. Weigh the evidence, if you can find any that's reliable! Panic again. Take advantage of those 'free market appraisals' shoved in your letter box. Be prepared for agents' reactions: enthusiasm, indifference, bordering on sneering even. Tastes in houses vary, as do agents' methods of going about their business. After investigating the options we decided our stress levels wouldn't tolerate a self- or assisted-self-sell.

We ended up having three agents inspect the property. The first seemed okay, but didn't follow up with a promised piece of information. The second we wouldn't touch with the proverbial barge pole. If he gave us that much information about identifiable people and places, we could only assume he'd do the same with our details. The third, Troy, was already ahead because he was from an agency that used the Jenman system, which we had been researching. He was courteous, confident and had a sheaf of traceable

recommendations. Troy also followed up and kept in touch over the intervening months until we were ready to actually employ an agent.

During those months we tackled the more pressing 'presentation' jobs. Brian repaired and painted guttering and replaced broken concrete in the barbecue area while I consulted gardening books. (Energetic type, that's me!) Brian decreed the south side fence had to be redone. I must admit the trees were holding it up.

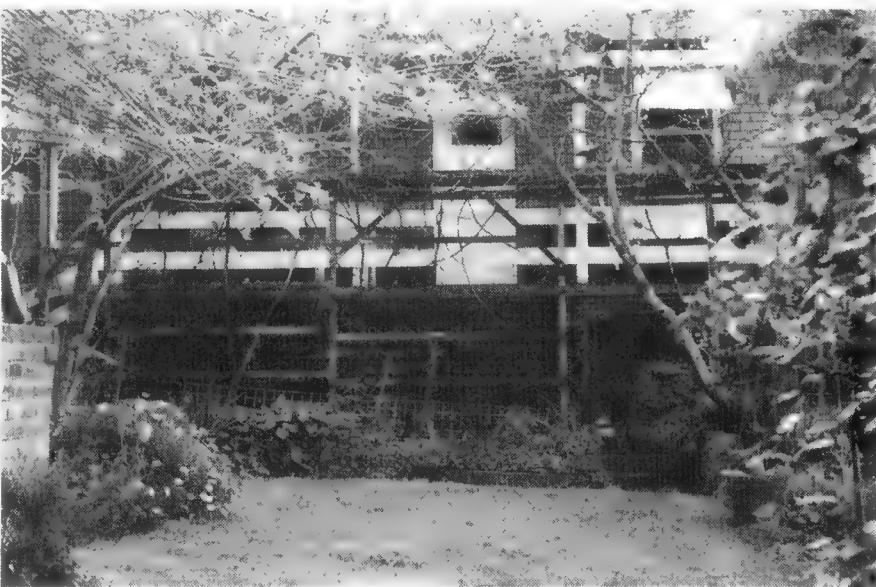
You wouldn't think it would be so hard to get a fence built, nothing fancy, just a standard paling fence. Only two contractors returned our calls, then one failed to keep his appointment to quote! Fortunately, the other turned up when he said he would, gave a reasonable quote and proceeded to do an excellent job, politely and with no fuss.

We were lucky with the removal of the scrubby trees that were growing through the fence. The gentleman came when stated, both for quoting and for the work itself. He made a point of

introducing his two young workers and ensured the area was clean before leaving. He also toured the place and recommended removing a couple of other branches, which he did for no extra charge.

Nothing else major was done. We did a bit of painting, some judicious planting, bought some fresh bedding and left it at that. The entrance hall had been two erky shades of-of-um - grubby mushroom? Never having had the spare \$50 for paint we'd lived with it. Now it was to be transformed in cream and white. It ended up white and yellow. The end result is never the same as the colour chart is it? It was okay though, fresh and welcoming. The other paint job was the outdoor laundry and loo. From being a bit of a hole with falling off tiles, a broken step and fly-specked light fittings and ceiling it was transformed into 'a room'. Blue and white and, again, fresh. As long as we kept the door closed against a neighbourhood tomcat that is!

Major jobs done, we decided to set



The rear of the house Sherrian and Brian needed to sell before moving to Tasmania.



Brian's planter box – a great use for the old fence posts.

things in motion. We thought we'd allowed ourselves plenty of time. A council 'hard and green' collection was coming up. Great, we could dispose of as much accumulated clutter as possible, then order a skip in the holidays. The holidays were also earmarked for painting the kitchen cupboards and the bathroom. I had busily planted seedlings due to flower July/August, which is when we expected to sell. We arranged for Troy to visit to discuss a timeframe. When would he suggest selling? Next week! Did I mention panic? Why didn't we say it was too soon? As Brian said, 'If you employ an expert then go with his advice.' Busy turned to frantic. A long weekend is not the best time to suddenly need a skip! Never mind, we found one, and rapidly filled it.

We made hasty trips to Bunnings for ferns and 'pots of colour', pansies and polyanthus in our case, and to Adairs

for doona covers for the front room. All just a bit of window dressing. We're not into 'push the cupboard over the cracks' style of selling. What you see is what you get. The board went up the following Wednesday.

The next weekend was spent rushing around putting out clean towels and taking in washing before heading off to the library or shops, anything to keep out of the way. Then, late Sunday, Dennis was on the phone. (It was one of Troy's rare weekends off so his dad had been showing the property to prospective buyers). He had a really good offer, could he come and talk it over? It all seemed a bit sudden, with neither of us feeling in top form yet trying to make a vital decision.

Could we have asked to delay till the morning? Who knows? Dennis asked if we wanted to call Troy ourselves; he had already checked with him as to any other interest. None so far and he was really happy with the offer. We didn't feel we could disturb his weekend, though he later said he wouldn't have minded. Some information didn't match with previous understandings, size of deposit for one. We had believed 10 percent was standard, but it seems not necessarily so. That was imperative for us and was sorted by Dennis. Sold. The attendant conditions were something of a pain, especially as we had said we were not interested in conditions! That piece of information was not passed on. Still, the settlement date was okay, even though we had people

THE JENMAN SYSTEM

The Jenman System or Ethics in Real Estate was devised by Neil Jenman, who is appalled at some of the practices common in the real estate industry. This method of buying and selling property aims to benefit the customer – not just the agent! His slogan 'don't sign anything' refers to the belief that the agent should first sign a code of practice outlining their way of operating before a client signs any agreement. For sellers, points covered in the Real Estate Consumer Protection Guarantee include: kick-backs (none taken), bait pricing (not used) and security at inspections (agent always accompanies viewers). The system works on trust and respect between agent and client. An expected price range is quoted and nothing is paid by the vendor unless, and until, the property is sold.

There are now an increasing number of agents using the Jenman System, many are already fully approved by Neil Jenman, others are working towards such approval. While their commission rate might be higher than some other agents, there are not large (huge in some cases) advertising bills. Such advertising is, Jenman believes, more about promoting the agent than your home. Jenman agents know their customers and pride themselves on matching buyer to property. If you have the chance to hear Neil Jenman speak – grab it! He is both inspiring and committed. His system is based on courtesy, trust and professionalism. It is well worth supporting.

For more information read *Real Estate Mistakes and Don't Sign Anything*, both by Neil Jenman, or visit the website: www.jenman.com.au

traipsing through while we were packing and trying to gather medical records, organise the van and farewell family and friends.

It was done, we'd sold. We should have enough to buy and live. Now we could relax and look ahead. But don't ever let anyone tell you it's easy!

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Chomp a Choko

by Gael Murray, Taree, NSW.

The choko is a vigorous fast-growing vine that produces an abundance of smooth, roughly pear-shaped fruit in summer. It is classed as a member of the gourd family. The fruit can be used in a wide variety of fruit or vegetable dishes.

Nutritionally, chokos provide some vitamin C, dietary fibre and traces of other minerals and vitamins. One hundred grams gives you about 75 kilojoules.

Chokos grow as a perennial in subtropical areas and an annual in temperate climates and must have a five- to six-month growing season free from frost. The plant requires little horizontal space, rather it needs an extensive area such as the top of a shed or a fence on which to climb.

In spring when frosts have finished, plant a fruit, larger end down and small end just above soil or lightly mulched, in well drained soil enriched with plenty of organic matter. Water well during the dry season, especially in the early stages. Add rotted manure or compost during the growing season and keep plants well mulched. Very little attention is necessary, except to keep the soil weed free and ensure it does not dry out in hot weather. In warmer areas after the plant has died down, cut the vine back to ground level and leave the tuber in the ground to grow again the following season.

RECIPES

Choko Chutney

- 4 lge chokos
- 2 lge Granny Smith apples
- 2 lge tomatoes, skinned
- 3 lge onions
- 2 cups sugar
- good pinch of allspice
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 1 tsp dry mustard
- 1 tbsp salt
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1/2 tsp ground cloves
- 1 1/2 cups mixed dried fruit
- 625 ml malt vinegar
- Peel and core chokos and apples.



Chop chokos and apples, tomatoes and onions. Put mixture into a saucepan with the remaining ingredients and stir constantly until sugar is dissolved. Bring to boil and then reduce heat. Simmer for two hours, stirring occasionally. Pour into sterilised jars and cover.

Choko Cream

- 1 kg chokos
- 1 kg pumpkin
- 2 kg sugar
- 250 g butter
- juice and rind of 4 lemons

Cook chokos and pumpkin till tender, then strain. Mash well, add other ingredients. Stir over a low heat till sugar has dissolved, then simmer for five minutes. Pour into jars and seal. Cream will thicken when it cools.

Baked Choko and Pumpkin

Layer thin slices of pumpkin and choko in an oven dish. Dot with butter, or make sure the pan is well oiled. Bake slowly for two hours.

See GR 141 for more choko recipes. ☺

TWO CHOKO MEALS

Chokos can be bland and uninspiring to cook with, but here are a couple of easy recipes that are guaranteed to jazz

up your taste buds and make use of those chokos.

Chokos with Bacon and Sour Cream

- 2 med chokos, diced, steamed
- 100 ml sour cream
- 1/4 tsp dried basil
- 1/4 tsp dried oregano
- 1/2 cup cheese, grated
- 4 shallots, chopped
- 2 chopped bacon rashers, crispy

Place diced chokos in an ovenproof dish. Combine sour cream, herbs, cheese and shallots to make a sauce and pour over the chokos. Sprinkle with bacon and cook uncovered in moderate oven for 15 minutes.

Choko Soup with Rice

- 1 kabana sausage, cubed
- 1 onion, chopped finely
- 1 tbsp butter
- 3 chokos, peeled and diced
- 3 tbsp rice
- 2 lt water
- 3 chicken stock cubes
- 1/2 dsp curry powder
- salt and pepper
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley

In a large saucepan fry sausage and onion in butter for a few minutes. Add choko and rice. Cook for a few more minutes before adding water, stock cubes, curry powder and seasoning. Bring to the boil. Cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 30 minutes. Serve sprinkled with parsley. ☺

Gloria Arndel

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SAVE POWER SWITCH OFF

by Patrick Hughes, Elizabeth Park, SA.

Most people would like to do more to protect the environment and provide a better and cleaner world for both themselves and their children. However, it seems that every time we do something, someone is there with their hand out asking for a little more, or else telling us how it can't be done. It is important to realise that you can do something and it does not always require money, time, or even expert advice. You simply have to look at the things you do from day to day. One of the easiest ways to have a positive effect on the environment is to examine how you can use less electricity.

AUDITING

Before you start reducing consumption you need to know where you are. For this you need to carry out an audit of electricity use just as an accountant would do for finances. This is important so that you can establish current usage and areas where you could improve. An audit could cover areas such as a room-by-room listing of electrical items and an item-by-item listing of power use. The number of hours use a room gets per day determines the cost of providing power to light and heat/cool it and to run any appliances in it.

COSTING

Once you have done your audit it is time to calculate your current costs. There is some simple arithmetic that will help you to understand how even small changes save electricity. When you are billed for electricity you are charged per kilowatt hour. You can work out your use per item with this equation: watts (for item, eg 100 W light globe) x hours of use ÷ by 1000 = your use in kilowatts. You can then multiply kilowatts by your electricity provider's rates per kilowatt to get the cost of running the item.

For example: you have two 100-watt globes in your kitchen and they are on from 6pm to 11pm six days a week, or 30 hours per week. At a rate of 15 cents per kilowatt hour this can be shown as: 200 W x 30 hrs ÷ 1000 = 6 kW, @ 15 cents = 90 cents per week.

REDUCING USE

As a result of your audit you now know how many lights and electrical items you use, how much electricity they use and what it costs you to run them. It is now time to look at ways of minimising electricity use.

Lighting

Take advantage of natural lighting. Avoid having windows covered by awnings or curtains if lighting is being used to compensate for loss of natural light. Keep windows clean, any particles on a window will cut natural light. Trim or prune trees and shrubs growing close to windows to allow light into rooms. Remove shades from lights to increase effectiveness.

Reduce globe watt size where possible; changing from 100 watt to 60 watt globes saves 40 percent on your bill (not much on one globe but significant over a large household). When using fluorescent lights make sure you clean the diffusers to maximise light output.

Use time delay switches for low use areas to turn off lights after a set period. Use dimmer switches where the same light intensity is not needed all the time.

Heating and Cooling

Insulation is the single most important factor in maintaining temperatures in any house. Insulation prevents rapid heat gain in summer and slows heat loss in winter. Ensure insulation is in good condition and placed correctly. Where insulation is damaged or nonexistent it makes good sense to replace or fit new insulation.

Windows and doors are another area of heat loss/entry. Ensure good seals exist and if necessary use door seals and draught excluders to manage draughts. Awnings on windows can be used to exclude summer heat and be withdrawn to allow winter light to enter. The use of pelmets and curtains will considerably reduce heat loss in the winter months as well as exclude heat in summer months. A drawback to this is the loss of light to the house.

Refrigerators and Freezers

Any device of this nature requires good seals and good maintenance to run efficiently. Ensure all seals are sound and that the thermostat is set to suit current needs. Defrost as required and keep the refrigeration condenser clean. Make sure all doors and covers are shut and that the appliance is opened only when necessary. Refrigerators and freezers operate more efficiently if the condenser is kept cool.

Hot Water Heating

Probably the one area you can save the most on electricity is hot water heating. Electricity use for water heating can be between 30 and 50 percent of your power bill. The easiest way to reduce power consumption here, provided you have a mains pressure storage-type hot water service, is to increase the insula-



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tion on the storage tank. This reduces heat loss from stored water and reduces power used to maintain water temperature. For flow-through-type water heaters, where no water is stored, there is relatively little energy used because water is only heated as it flows through the unit.

Miscellaneous Appliances

Computers: Switch off computers when not in use; although relatively low amounts of power are used, if left on continuously the cost mounts up.

Television and Video: Most people will turn off the television when it's not in use, but video players are on 24 hours

a day, 7 days a week. With a video operating on even a low 16 watts, at 15 cents per kilowatt this is about 40 cents per week.

Radio and Stereo: Much the same as video players, often on continuously and at about the same cost.

There are many other areas to look at and as you start to become more aware you will find more ways to save electricity. If it only meant saving dollars, many of us would not be motivated to change our ways. However, with the use of electricity comes a huge impact on the world we live in. Approximately 57 percent of all

greenhouse gases are produced by burning fossil fuels such as coal and oil. A large proportion of this is produced by power generation. We owe it to ourselves, and our children, to make an attempt to minimise our power use and start being more aware. We only have one Earth and one shot to make it right.

For details of electricity usage and running costs of all types of appliances contact the Sustainable Energy Authority in your state or visit the website of the Victorian Sustainable Energy Authority at: www.seav.vic.gov.au and follow the prompts to 'Advice – Your Home'. ☺

True Grime Story

by Stephen Cue, Dunoon, NSW.

I would like to share some advice given to me by a professional cleaner years ago about floor cleaning with the old-fashioned mop. Most people use only the outside of the mop in a side-to-side flopping motion (figure 1). This limits the amount of contact area between the floor and mop, which results in the dirt and grime simply being smeared around.

For the best results, after squeezing the water from the mop head in the bucket, dab it firmly on the floor to break up the clump of threads. Then, lift it off the surface and spin the handle so the threads splay out, dropping it immediately back on the floor (figure 2).

Sweep the mop back and forth in front of you in a figure-eight pattern while carefully walking backwards, allowing the splayed threads of the mop head to swirl at the outer limits of the loops (figure 3). Lift and spin the mop several times as you go to bring new surface areas of the mop into contact with the floor and reduce the number of times that you have to rinse.

However, when you do rinse, give the mop a good sloshing around in the bucket before squeezing it out, as this method really picks up the dirt.

For mopping large areas, simply

Figure 1

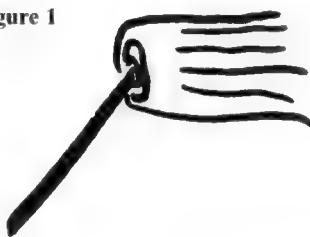


Figure 2



Figure 3

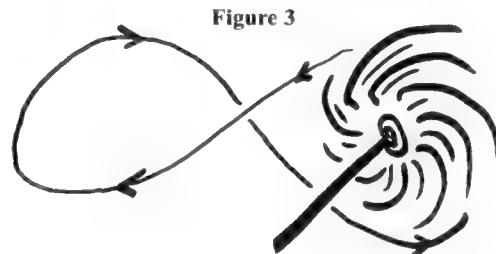
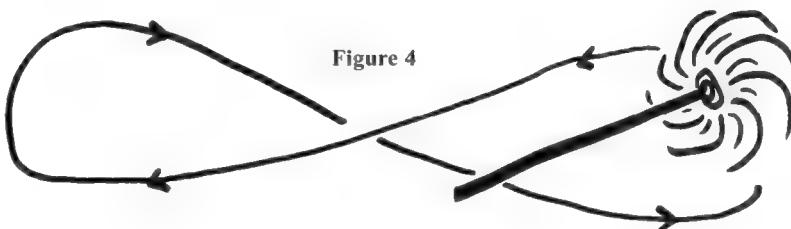


Figure 4



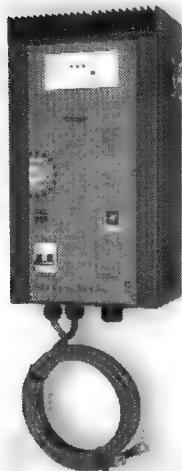
take a wider stance and work the splayed mop head as far wide as you can comfortably reach while carefully

pacing backwards over the area you wish to clean (figure 4).

Happy mopping! ☺

ROUND THE MARKET PLACE

We hope you enjoy this feature introducing new products relevant to readers' lifestyles and interests.



VOYAGER INVERTER

Solar Energy Australia has just released a new range of Voyager stand-alone pure sinewave inverters. Available as a 1300 watt/12 volt, 1700 watt/24 volt or 1700 watt/48 volt on request, the Voyager series is the most efficient inverter (particularly at low loads) that the company has produced. Placing performance before price, the company believes it has come up with a package that will appeal to all buyers looking for a quality pure sinewave inverter. AC and DC filters ensure low levels of EMI and an efficient load detection circuit will save further valuable battery power. Other features include easier installation, improved DC input voltage range, optional remote switch, low distortion levels, improved surge performance, optional remote display, impending alarm outputs and the ability to mount an AC circuit breaker or RCD on the front of the unit.

For further details contact Solar Energy

Australia, 1/15 Nicole Close, North Bayswater 3153. Ph: 03-9761-5877, or email: sales@solaraustralia.com.au

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WAECO mobile refrigeration units are now available with three separate temperature compartments in the one unit and are ideal for anyone on the move. One section is for frozen goods, the other for refrigerated food and drinks, and there is also a dairy/vegetable/fruit crisper section. The fridges come in two sizes, 80 and 110 litres, and are powered by a powerful Danfoss BD50 compressor motor. These are versatile units with minimum power consumption, silent running, high-grade steel casing and ozone-friendly insulation. They operate with 12 or 24 volts, have automatic switch-over with priority switch mode for mains operation, and an optional 240-volt AC adaptor. They are suitable for solar operation.

For more information contact WAECO, 2 Mary Street, Blackburn 3130. Ph: 1800-212-121, or visit: www.waeco.com.au

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For over ten years Organic Crop Protectants Pty Ltd has provided quality BFA-certified organic products to the horticultural industry around Australia. This latest product is the first Australian *Trichoderma* species in granular form, making it ideal for use in nurseries and landscaping where it can be easily incorporated in potting mixes. This beneficial fungus colonises around plant roots and creates a biological barrier to soil diseases including pythium, rhizoctonia, fusarium, phytophthora and sclerotinia. With its high level of user safety, Trich-A-Soil is a viable alternative for suppressing 'damping-off' root diseases while reducing all the problems associated with pesticide use. It has the highest viable colony-forming-unit count of any commercial product available – this is good for colonisation levels and plant protection. Research currently underway suggests *Trichoderma* might also enhance growth and boost plant immune systems.

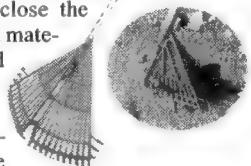
For more information contact Organic Crop Protectants, 42 Halloran Street, Lilyfield 2040. Ph: 1800-634-204, or visit: www.ocp.com.au

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handle is anodised aluminium to prevent rust.

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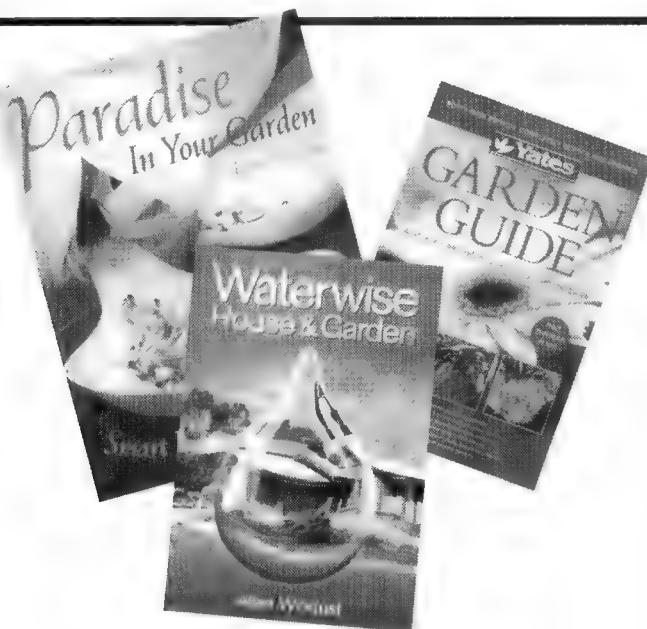
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For enquiries contact Maryke Booth, PO Box 1573, Fyshwick, ACT 2609. Ph: 02-6280-4128.



RECENT RELEASES

Titles described can be ordered through your nearest bookstore.



WATERWISE HOUSE AND GARDEN

Allan Windust

The drought has been a timely reminder of just how precious water is; this guide can help you cut your home and garden water consumption in half. For the home, grey and black water systems are comprehensively discussed, as are useful daily reduction strategies. Outside, Windust takes a planned approach to all aspects of dry-weather gardening, suggesting we can eliminate unnecessary watering by working with nature. He explains the science behind survival strategies of plants in dry conditions and how soil and water interact. Chapters on garden design, mulching, individual plant species and what to do during a drought also make pertinent reading.

P/b, 190pp, Landlinks Press, PO Box 1139, Collingwood 3066.
Ph: 1800-645-051. RRP: \$29.95

ORGANIC HORTICULTURE STARTERS KIT NATIVE FLOWER GROWERS STARTER KIT

David Wood

NSW's Sapphire Coast Producers' Association is a de facto department of agriculture for alternative farmers and, in the process of encouraging local landholders to diversify, has put together these two kits, and a third one on meat rabbit production. Information has been compiled from various authoritative and up-to-date sources, informed by practical experience. To ensure credibility the kits have been extensively reviewed by a panel of experts, including Agriculture NSW. Topics covered in each kit include getting established, management, harvest and selling. Books also contain diagrams, flow charts, useful addresses and a sample business plan with planning tables for you to fill in. This detailed and comprehensive information on how to get nontraditional farming businesses off the ground will be invaluable to many.

P/b (spiral bound), 154pp, SCPA Publishing, PO Box 1054, Bega 2550. Ph: 02-6492-0161. RRP: \$49 plus \$8.50 p&h.

PARADISE IN YOUR GARDEN

Jenny Allen

Looking for inspiration? This large format book describing the inception and daily life of Jenny Allen's permaculture garden has it in spades. Allen approached her garden as a designed ecology based on natural principles, viewing it as an integrated whole rather than as discrete parts. The result provides her with food, entertainment, tranquillity, art and insights into nature. Allen covers all components of permaculture, and her hand-drawn plans and colourful photos aid in conveying the link between theory and practice. Although Allen's garden is in subtropical Queensland, the permaculture principles described are applicable to a range of different garden sizes and climates.

P/b, 248pp, New Holland, 14 Aquatic Drv, Frenchs Forest 2068.
Ph: 02-9975-6799. RRP: \$49.95

YATES GARDEN GUIDE

The 41st edition of the Yates guide is a visual delight; each chapter is colour coded, comparable information is condensed into easy-reference tables, and the photos are excellent. Equal space is given to organic methods in sections on pests, diseases and weeds and plant nutrients and fertilisers, and chapters are devoted to topical issues like composting and low-water gardening. This is a handy general reference that covers all aspects of gardening design, implementation and maintenance, complemented by individual profiles of common plants, trees, natives and vegetables.

P/b, 466pp, HarperCollins, 25 Ryde Rd, Pymble 2073. Ph: 02-9952-5013. RRP: \$34.95

GOING ORGANIC

Your Guide to a Healthier Life

Kris Abbey

This Australian guide to going organic is wide-ranging and reader-friendly, based on the author's 15 years in the health industry. It includes GM issues, farming, shopping, eating, home, bringing up kids and more. Abbey provides independent research to back up assertions and comprehensively covers health and environmental implications. Chock-full of facts, recipes, useful addresses and handy hints, it also features amusing anecdotes from Abbey's own life, particularly her country childhood. If you were wondering how or why to become more organic, this is a terrific place to start.

P/b, 256pp, New Holland, 14 Aquatic Drv, Frenchs Forest 2068.
Ph: 02-9975-6799. RRP: \$29.95

CHEMICAL-FREE PEST CONTROL

Hundreds of Practical and Inexpensive Ways to Control Pests Without Chemicals

Robin Stewart

With a few household staples, such as cloves, eucalyptus oil, citronella and pyrethrum, you can rid yourself of numerous garden and household pests, from cockroaches to cane toads to mildew. A companion volume to the practical and popular *Chemical-Free Home*, this book provides effective, easy solutions to help you wipe out pests in an affordable, safe and nonallergenic way. The terrific chapter on family pets discusses not only cats and dogs, but even blue-tongue lizards.

P/b, 348pp, Black Inc, Level 5/289 Flinders Ln, Melb 3000. Ph: 03-9654-2000. RRP: \$21.95.



DOWN HOME ON THE FARM

by Megg Miller.

Top shelf? Yes, there seems to be one in every house and, whether in the laundry or spare room, it holds a treasure trove of misplaced or forgotten objects. My troublesome top shelf is on the book shelves and had rested undisturbed for more years than I wish to disclose. A new stepladder brought it within reach. The contents – a leather case and several cardboard boxes – were well disguised under layers of dust. A twinge of guilt over poorly performed cleaning duties was easily assuaged; life is for living not stressing over the depth of dust.

The treasure was contained in a shabby old box. Not money or jewellery, but family snaps in all shapes and sizes, many in original packets bearing the names of long-defunct pharmacies and photographic shops. Most still held a loose array of tiny negatives. Some photo packets dated back to my childhood, others were from my parents' working years when they were both single. There were studio shots too, of both parents as youngsters all dressed up in starched attire. Although they were only a few years old at the time the photographs were taken, both resembled miniature adults, no doubt reflecting the then contemporary view of children. There didn't appear to be much fun around.

Grandparents, aunts and uncles, workmates of both parents, tennis teams, even shooting parties on horses with dogs eager to start the chase. They were all captured for posterity in black and white. Were those fit, youthful people the same tired, harassed parents I recalled, the same aged people who struggled with ill health and lost?

When you're growing up it's hard to believe that older people have lived and loved, held great hopes and dreams and enjoyed happy times. At 20 I was absolutely certain no one, least of all my parents, had felt as deeply about life's issues as me. By 40, having acquired a little wisdom and a wider view of the world, it was easier to recognise their experience and understanding and acknowledge it came from living life fully.

Shuffling through photos, it was fascinating to see my parents as single adults, stylishly dressed and having a good time. In one my father was sitting proudly alongside his dog, Lassie. He had enthralled my brothers and I as kids with stories about this dog and its weekly treat of an ice cream. Naturally, we were outraged at such a wanton act – ice cream, after all, was an occasional treat then. And there was my mother, on her horse and wearing jodhpurs identical to the ones I'd found among some of her old clothes. They're care-

fully stored away in my antique trunk. The best photo was of my mother in her nursing uniform, stunningly attractive and very professional.

All the evidence suggested they had enjoyed lots of fun, both singularly and together. It was a relief to know it hadn't all been hard work and drudgery. We kids must have been an unrewarding lot, especially in our teen years, and my mother had also endured long periods of poor health. No wonder my memories conjure up tired, worried faces. Seeing both of them carefree and



One of the photos unearthed: my mother Doris looking starry eyed on her wedding day in the early 1940s. Sadly there was no wedding memorabilia in her boxes of treasures.

laughing their heads off with friends lightened my melancholy thoughts and soon I was grinning like a Cheshire cat.

A bundle of letters transported me even further into the past. These were from my maternal grandmother and spanned more than a decade. Over that period her handwriting deteriorated until it was almost illegible, failing eyesight making the process of writing a difficult, frustrating act. The content wasn't world shattering; it was domestic, describing and discussing family events, local activities, the weather, antics of wild birds or pet cats, all written in an everyday manner that was bursting with the affection she felt for all of us.

What stood out was the timelessness of the descriptions of hot dry summers, the dropping level in tanks, worry about the dams... The anticipation of the break was universal, followed by pleased descriptions of the changes a fall of rain brought. It was uncanny, her words about shrivelled fruit, undersized tomatoes and even the dispirited livestock could have been written last week. They were descriptions you or I or other readers could have sent in to Feedback or to friends and family. The issues besetting rural people clearly haven't changed all that much since the 1960s.

There isn't a lot that's new. There are countless wheels working satisfactorily already; it's not necessary to reinvent them. We just need to open our eyes. This doesn't mean we don't move on and grow, or seek new solutions to old problems. Progress and change are essential, as well as inevitable, but it's important to gain perspective and grasp a bigger picture. Reading my grandmother's letters

highlighted the cyclic nature of our climate and was a reminder that all things pass, including droughts.

It was after 2am when, dusty, overtired and bemused, I flexed numb limbs and reluctantly packed the past away. It had been one hell of an evening. I wished I'd been old and mature enough to have gained more from my grandmother. I'd long felt an affinity with her, and owe my love of poultry and farmstock to happy times during holidays helping her collect eggs or feed lambs. That in itself is a remarkable legacy; it's probably greedy to wish for more.

When the days lengthen and watering stops ruling my evenings, I'll get a couple of albums and try and make some sense out of the jumble of photos. I missed the opportunity to sit with my

parents and record their reminiscences, so the relevance of many of the people in the old pics is already lost. It would be a shame to deny Suni this part of her background and, who knows, one day there may be grandchildren curious about their forbears. Although I'm not big on family history, it is fascinating to see traits in Suni or my nephews that are reminiscent of my parents or grandparents. It's nice to feel a sense of belonging and I'm sure that routine activities like watering and gardening, or even chook work, will occasionally evoke memories of my grandmother and her activities. She lived until she was in her 90s. Should I be blessed with such a long and, hopefully, healthy life, that's a lot of years of watering ahead. I don't even want to contemplate it! ¶

PENPALS

Hello, my name is Samuel. I am 8. I live in the country. My family is renting a house on a wheat farm. We home school. I like Star Wars, computer games, Pokemon, fantasy/adventure games (like Knights), and reading. I really want a penpal of any age.

Samuel (GR155)

C/- PO Box 117, Seymour 3661.

I'm a 33-year-old female, Virgo. I'm into rune stones and tarot. I'm vegetarian and have certificates in aromatherapy and herbal medicine, make my own soap and lip balm, and have recently started growing my own herbs so as to collect seed and propagate. I also like reading and I do embroidery. Would prefer writing to a female close to my age, but a male would be okay.

Trish,

PO Box 426, Aitkenvale 4814.

I am new to country life and living on the land and would love to hear from anyone who is in a similar position as myself, a single woman who finds that even the smallest jobs are extremely difficult without muscle or the knowledge of tool use. I would like to hear about your challenges and how you get around them.

CJ,

PO Box 6099, Coffs Harbour 2450.

I would like to chat to people like myself. I'm a 30-year-old married mum with three beautiful kids. We love our garden and growing our own vegetables. I love people and talking to all different walks of life, and am very open minded and down to earth. I have lots of interests, some of them are gardening, alternative medicine, environmental issues, music (all kinds), op shopping, collecting weird and wonderful things. I would also love to talk to anyone who can give me some good tips on getting my chooks to go clucky. Grab a pen and get writing; I will reply to every letter.

Sharr (GR155),

C/- PO Box 117, Seymour 3661.

I'm a 45-year-old single male, interested in the environment and alternative living and love doing leatherwork. Friendly and caring. In jail in Queensland. Looking for penpals anywhere.

Mr Kym Hagean,

Private Mail Bag 1, Rathdowney 4287.

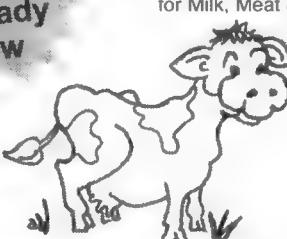
Hi there, I'm a 46-year-old man and would love a penpal. I have a garden and a pair of Australian budgies. I have a bike that I occasionally ride.

Arthur Galea,

77 Witt St, Benalla 3672.

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Wimmera Miniature Cattle
Bob & Lynne Seidel
WIMMERA, Moonie Hwy Dalby 4405
Ph: 07-4668-2159 Fax: 07-4668-2149

GRASSIFIEDS

HOW TO ADVERTISE

Use the form provided below, or a separate sheet of paper, to print your advertisement clearly, **not in block capitals**, including correct punctuation. If you have more than one ad please print each one on a separate page. Remember to include an address or phone number in your advertisement. Count the number of words and multiply by 85 cents per word (phone number counted as one word) to work out the total cost of your advertisement. Send **with payment** to Grass Roots, PO Box 117, Seymour 3661, before the deadline and we'll include your advertisement in the next issue of Grass Roots. **Deadline for GR 157 is 25 April, 2003.** Please do not fax ads.

Sender's Name For issues no/s
Address Classification
..... Postcode Cost

Cost for advertisements is 85c per word

PROPERTY FOR SALE

NEW SOUTH WALES

NORTHERN RIVERS, LARNOOK AREA, 2 ac, secluded, Border Range views. Lounge, bathroom, kitchen, 3 b/rs, gas refrigerator, stove, ph, solar power, solar HWS, c/port, lge water tanks, shed, concrete drive, rates \$750. Lismore 35 mins, Ballina or Byron 1 hr, Gold Coast 90 mins. Price \$99,000. Ph: owner, 02-6629-5362, fax: 02-6629-5492, email: porritt@nrg.com.au

WELLINGTON: Private 62 ac undulating basalt country, river frontage, lge dam, fantastic 360° views, abundant fishing, building entitlement, power avail. Includes \$400 per month income, c/van, solar power, solar pump & council approved plans for architect designed home. \$70,000. Ph: 02-6845-3782.

LIGHTNING RIDGE: Residential mining camp with c/van, annexe with fireplace, indoor & outdoor shower, laundry, solar power & generator, 12V/240V TV, water tank. Mine partly dug. Nice safe area. Bargain at \$4500. Ph: 03-5154-8368, or 0438-391-768.

BUNNAN, WEST OF SCONE, 2 ac, 3 b/r, sleepout, offire, air-con, tank water, septic, spring water we drink, great views, heaps of wildlife. \$69 500. Please ring: 02-6545-4210.

BOMBALA, 3 b/r house on 3½ ac of land, 5 mins walk from town, hospital & schools. Good investment. \$90,000 ONO. Contact: D Williams, 'Greenmount', WYNDHAM, NSW 2550.

PRIVATE OASIS, close to the heart of Bellingen: situated on a huge 6677 sq m block with picturesque permaculture garden & exotic f/trees this (10 years chemical free) property is located next to stunning Koompartoo Retreat. Within easy walking distance of schools, shops, CBD, river & bushland in the beautiful Bellingen township, it has great potential for B&B or holiday accom & is only 10 mins from stunning beaches. The rustic 3 b/r timber loft house has been recently renovated & is in immaculate condition throughout. Take time out in the spa or relax with a cold drink on the fabulous shady verandahs. For summer entertaining there's a beautiful outdoor entertainment area that has been fully paved & landscaped complete with rock & water features. This could be the start of a new business venture or of a totally new lifestyle. The property is located at 6 Dudley St. \$425,000. Contact owner at: 02-6655-0151, mobile. 0411-471-144.

Internet: www.domain.com.au

WOODFORD: 4 b/r Queenslander on 21 ac, perm water, 1 ha persimmons (Fuyu) under hail net. Views to Glasshouse Mountains. \$265,000. Ph: 02-6683-1778

ARALUEN: SMALL PROPERTY, $\frac{3}{5}$ ac, triangular shape. Gentle slope to sml dam. A few peach trees & native trees. Five mins to friendly pub, 30 mins to Braidwood, 75 mins to Batemans Bay, 90 mins to Canberra. Close to Deura Nat Pk. Council permission to build. Area has electricity & ph. \$19,000. Ph: 02-4842-2707.

NIMBIN HILLS: 12 km from town. Easy access to regional centres: 25 mins to Kyogle, 30 mins to Murwillumbah, 35 mins to Lismore. Only one hr to Rainbow Region ocean beaches. Close to Border Ranges Nat Pk, r/forests & waterfalls. Exceptionally gorgeous house: mudbrick on stone foundations with timber features & antique windows, 4 b/rs, huge living room, spacious verandahs, excel views, great soil, composting toilet, off/place. New solar electric system with inverter: both 24V and 240V wiring. Walk to public school & bus stop. Steiner school nearby. Exclusive use of 5 ac, excel horse pasture. Share in community assets incl tractors, quarry, roads, dams & forests plus recreation building. Lillifield Community offers a good blend of community support & independence. Community encourages regeneration of native flora & fauna: cats & dogs prohibited. \$135,000. Contact Danièle on: 02-6689-7466.

Email: ssledge@spot.com.au

FIFTY KILOMETRES SOUTH OF GRAFTON:
83 ac tranquillity, not isolated, power, ph, lg dam, wet weather crk. Lovely mud home with leadlight, extension not completed. Primary & high school bus passes block, 6 km Nymboida village, friendly neighbourhood. \$160,000. Ph: 02-6649-4192.

PRIVATE PARADISE, 6.57 ha, northern NSW, Mt Warning area, 2 crks, palms, hardwoods, r/forest, NE aspect, at Border Ranges Nat Pk, in well estab multiple occupancy under company title. \$88,000. Ph: Jo 02-6679-3445.

GRASSIFIEDS

PROPERTY FOR SALE

QUEENSLAND

BEAUTIFUL FIVE-ACRE BUSH BLOCK, 25 mins from Bundaberg. \$32,000 ONO. Ph: Michael, 02-6689-5122 AH only.

FORTY MINUTES NORTH OF TOWNSVILLE, at the base of Paluma Range Nat Pk. 21 ac organic exotic fruit farm, 150 lime trees, 100 lemons, 100 avos, 100 jaboticaba, 150 Keitt mangos + 20 exotic varieties & many other rare exotic fruits. Two bores, endless water, power, 1 b/r house, 9 x 7 m shed, ride-on mower, estab gardens, quiet & peaceful environment. Ph: Brian, 0438-188-708.

STANTHORPE, RARE OPPORTUNITY to own this solid granite home (210 m²). Massive high-tech solar system, 240V. New Stanley stove. Huge off/place, ph on. Mountain air, secluded 40 ac bush/cleared, fertile soil, perm waterhole, springs, wildlife. \$160,000. Ph: 07-4681-0478.

HELENVALE: 100 ac share in 500 ac council approved multiple occupancy. Bordering World Heritage Wet Tropics & Nat Pk. Permanent crk, lge shed with ph, estab f/trees, coconut palms, lge inground concrete pool. Water pressure 110 PSI, suitable 240V water wheel. Mail service, 30 mins primary school, general store, 30 mins to Cooktown & beaches, 1 hr Cape Tribulation. Share bordered by main crk, neighbour's small eco lodge. Approval granted for ecotourism, ie: bushwalks, hides, seed collection etc. 44 ac of undulating open forest, 56 ac of nature refuge, home to rare & endangered fauna & flora. Approximately 250 m above sea level, with an ideal average temp of 24° C year round. Just 25 - 30 mins to Bloomfield & Annan rivers, fabulous fishing, barra, mangrove jack, grunter, finger-mark etc. Price \$142,000 ONO, plus freehold cost of \$24K, 6% govt loan or option to pay out. Phone for further info: 07-4758-1626

BEAUTIFUL QUARTER-ACRE residential section on tree-covered Macleay Island. Tranquil piece of paradise. Daily ferry services, good facilities, tar-sealed roads. Located off bottom end of Stradbroke Island on the Brisbane side. \$30,000. Ph: 03-5023-6984.

DOUBLE STOREY HOUSE on 10 ac, part of 1300 ac community. Permanent water, solar power to run washing machine, computer, TV, lights. Maryborough 75 km. Work all year round. \$55,000. Ph: 07-4697-8049.

QUEENSLAND – ELLESMORE (Nanango) 5 ac block with shed. Has toilet & bath & tank water. Power & ph to boundary. Has seasonal crk/waterhole. School bus. \$22,000, or will swap for land within 3 hrs of Perth, WA. Ph: 08-9309-3050, or 07-4657-1296.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please notify us of any change of contact details so we can redirect enquiries.
Call us on 03-5792-4000. ¶

**DEADLINES: GR157 – APRIL 25
GR158 – JUNE 25**

NANANGO, 3 b/r home, no work needed, verandah on 3 sides, screened, dble garage, estab gardens, tank/town water, fenced. \$120,000. Ph: 02-4163-2302.

RAVENSHOE, ATHERTON TABLELANDS, masonry block war service home on 11 ac, bore & tanks, 3 km on bitumen rd to major township with all facilities: pubs, supermarkets, schools to year 12, doctors etc. House has 2 b/rs & sleep-out or office, verandahs all round, lge garage, workshop. Adjacent World Heritage area. \$105,000 ONO. Ph: 07-5532-7567.

INGHAM HALF-HOUR AWAY, 87 ac natural bushland, mobile home, primary school. Vendor finance avail. \$95,000. Ph: 07-4064-2848.

MILLMERRAN, 1½ hrs Toowoomba, 22 ac, 3 b/r spacious home. Cathedral ceilings, kitchen & lounge, 2 sheds, power, gas cooking, r/water, dam, fenced house yard, school bus, bitumen rds. \$140,000. Ph: 07-4695-4184, or 0428-954-184.

GIN GIN AREA, 30 ac vacant, huge water catchment. \$28,500 ONO. M & H Bennett, 716 Coraki Rd, RUTHVEN 2480.

VICTORIA

APPROXIMATELY ONE ACRE, church, with kitchen, living possibilities, tank water & power, 3.5 hrs west of Melbourne. \$38,500. Ph: 03-9580-7594, or 03-9580-2365.

LAND AND MUDBRICK PACKAGE, 3 ac & 1500 mudbricks. Outskirts of historic Clunes, town water & power. \$35,000. Ph: 03-5472-5185.

TASMANIA

LORINNA, NW Tas (16.59 ha), lakeside, bush, pasture, crk, shack. \$80,000 ONO. Ph: 0439-340-925.

BULLAMAKANKA WILDERNESS RETREAT: 3 storey, 50 sq home on a 5 ac block, NW coast of Tas on sealed rd. Eight-minute video avail for viewing. Genuine enq only. \$280,000. Ph: 03-6456-5204 after 6pm.

ELLENDALE: HASSE FREE LIVING is yours for the taking in this fresh home on easy care block. A huge lounge with woodheater, great kitchen & dining, 3 b/rs & sunroom, all in great order. Double garage with mechanical pit is a bonus. Around \$75,000. For more details ph: Debbie Burgess (agent) on 0417-112-860, or see: www.macreal.com.au

ELLENDALE: THIS GENEROUS FAMILY HOME is on ¾ ac & has all the comforts, 4 b/rs, lounge with off/place, glass doors to lge dining with woodheater & blackwood kitchen with St George appliances. Double garage with power & f/trees in backyard \$83,000. For more details ph: Debbie Burgess (agent) on 0417-112-860, or see: www.macreal.com.au

ELLENDALE: THIS PROPERTY IS A GREAT country retreat on 14½ ac with 4 paddocks & orchard of 30 f/trees, chook & pig pens, garden shed, 2 car c/port & workshop. This property is great for horses & sheep, no water problems being on town water & having 99 yr lease water licence with access to ½ million ltr per week. Home is character w/b with dble b/rs, kitchen, lounge with french doors leading to deck looking over property & the river Jones. Home is immaculate, nothing to do! \$85,000. For more details ph: Debbie Burgess (agent) on 0417-112-860, or see: www.macreal.com.au

ELLENDALE: These 91 ac have a long history of production from fruit to beef, sheep, hay & vegetable seed. There are 86 ac of undulating pasture that is divided into 16 paddocks, ⅓ of which are reticulated from 2 dams & balance is 5 ac of r/forest. The property also boasts a 40 Mlt water licence, which can be sold separately or leased. The farmhouse is spacious & has been fully modernised, with a wrap-around sun deck that leads to a solar-heated pool & onto a lge self-cont granny flat. There is a variety of modern well-constructed machinery & storage sheds & an extensive range of modern farm machinery incl an air-conditioned tractor. \$265,000. For more details ph: Kim Herbert (agent) on 0438-349-906, or see www.macreal.com.au

NORTH-WEST TASMANIA, 'Loongana', 50 ac bush block, perm river through centre, NE facing. \$50,000. Ph: 03-6429-1128.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

FORTY-THREE ACRES, native grasses, gums. Old stone, w/b house, 2 – 3 b/rs, 45 mins east of Adelaide. Mains, r/water, organic vegie garden, chooks, olives, excel sheds, stunning view, peace. \$269,000. Ph: 08-8388-0948.

KANGAROO ISLAND, 300 ac bush, 5 ac cleared, fenced, with \$50,000 improvements incl 400 sq m greenhouse, power, house slab. Permanent springs & spectacular ocean views. \$128,000 ONO. Ph: Charley, 0409-280-978, 08-8261-3236.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

FARM FOR SALE: 500 ac fully developed property, 100 km south of Darwin, NT, 10 km from township of Batchelor. Year round water supply. Ready for horticulture or aquaculture. Asking \$450K & very happy to negotiate. Ph: Jesse Leal, 0414-455-508 anytime.

FOR RENT/CARETAKER WANTED

PERSON(S) WANTED TO SHARE secluded 30 ac Hunter bush block, 60 km from Newcastle. Ph: 02-4938-2036.

All ads on these pages are accepted at the discretion of the publishers ¶

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR RENT/CARETAKER WANTED

HOUSESITTER REQUIRED SW Tas: 12 mths from June 2003. Small acreage, 45 mins from New Norfolk, suit retired. References, bond, police clearance required. Contract conditions apply. Ph: 03-6288-2167.

TO LEASE - TASMANIAN PROPERTY, acreage with r/forest walk & crystal clear crk adjoining Mt Field Nat Pk, 1 hr NW Hobart. Two farmhouses, 3 s/c fully furnished cottages. Some livestock incl cows, sheep, hens, ducks. Suit up to 5 perm tenants or rent as guest farm-stay accom. Contact Elizabeth: 07-3379-1340, or 0418-833-533.

FOR RENT in 2 - 3 months, 3 b/r house in Dunkeld, big block, beautiful gardens, huge vegie patch, chook house, s/c heater, wood fired stove, solar & mains hot water. Very cosy open plan design. Quiet part of town near the arboretum & lake. Great town, school & neighbours. Hamilton 20 mins, 1 hr Warrnambool & Port Fairy. Beautiful red gum country with Grampians 5 mins away. Can rent fully furnished. Rent neg. Ph: Michael, 03-5577-2272.

COMMUNITIES/SHARES

BEAUTIFUL EIGHT-ACRE BUSH BLOCK on estab 400 ac community, 15 mins Nimbin, 40 mins Lismore. Two houses. First house: 1 b/r fully self-cont, fire-resistant steel frame, solar powered, incl gas stove & fridge, excel condition, perfect for single person or couple. Second house needs renovation: block is heavily treed, has own dam & abundant wildlife, very private. \$75,000. Ph: owner, 02-6633-1341.

PROPERTY WANTED

HOUSE WANTED NAGAMBIE AREA. Ph: Sheridan, 03-9455-3661.

FOR SALE

NEW PLASTIC TREE GUARDS, 560 mm high x 400 mm wide, UV stabilised, boxes of 330, \$30 + freight; or 10c each + freight. Two x AGA stoves, 1 oil fired. Best offers. Ph: 0427-254-319.

'GRASS ROOTS': numbers 1 - 125 (6 & 7 missing), very good condition. \$150 + freight. Ph: 03-5772-1548.

'GRASS ROOTS' SELECTION: 26 to 143 - some missing but totalling 90 magazines. *Earth Garden* selection: 63 to 113 + incl most 30s & 40s. Plus other magazines. \$250 the lot, delivered. Ph: 02-6494-2255 evenings.

ELECTRIC SPINNER, drum roll carder, knitting machine, 800 fashion labels, bags & bags of alpaca fibre & more. Everything you need to value-add to your home-grown fibre. Loads of advice. Would like around \$2500 as all is worth approx \$5000. Ph: 03-5759-2770 AH.

PLACING AN AD?
See page 76 for details

VISCOUNT POPTOP CARAVAN, 15 ft, 4 berth, with canvas annexe, 10 mths rego. VGC. \$6000. Contact: D Williams, 'Greenmount', WYNDHAM, NSW 2550.

'GRASS ROOTS', issues 26 - 155. \$450 + freight. Ph: 08-8581-7054.

'GRASS ROOTS' back issues 70 - 88, 85, 88, 89 - 130. \$150 ONO + post. Ph: 03-5952-6042 after 6pm.

HONEY EXTRACTOR, stainless, 2-frame, manual, plus other beekeeping equip. \$500 the lot ONO. Ph: 03-5593-9208.

MICE TRAPS, Row-ee multi-catch \$20, \$5 postage covers one or more. Harry Rowe, 79 Reddall St, LAKE ILLAWARRA 2528. Ph: 02-4296-1129.

OPPORTUNITIES

OPPORTUNITY FOR A FUTURE in community/work/life, suit homeless/parentless 18 to 23 yr old. Offering clean, modest, separate living quarters on rural residential property, organic foods, in caring home environment. Genuine person in need & desire for a head start call: 07-5485-2022.

BUSINESS FOR SALE

GENERAL STORE, LICENSED, NEWS-AGENCY & LICENSED POST OFFICE: Yaapeet, Vic. Air-conditioned modern f/hold shop & sep Federation 3 b/r residence on big block. Close primary school & nat pks. Closeknit smaller rural community - great lifestyle! Opportunity to grow. \$80,000 WIWO incl plant. Plus SAV. Call for more info: 03-5395-7292 BH.

PUBLICATIONS

'GRASS ROOTS' mags from No 7 to 146. maggieb@cherry.com.au

HOMESCHOOLING? The book, *A Steiner Homeschool?* contains advice on creativity, bureaucracy, discipline, programming, curriculum and more. Send \$14 (Visa/Mast, cheque, money order) to: Alan Whitehead, Box 329, BLACKHEATH 2785.

www.users.bigpond.com/goldenbeetlebooks/
BOOKS, NEW AND OLD. Australiana, lifestyle, Pacific, biography, horticulture, gardening, outdoors. Lists avail. BA & JM Wallace, Box 325, PORTLAND 3305.

NO ENDORSEMENT

Classifieds are accepted in good faith, however, Grass Roots Publishing P/L does not necessarily endorse products and services advertised herein. *

SUPPRESSED & UNUSUAL TECHNOLOGIES CATALOGUE: Free energy devices, anti-gravity, hydrogen fuel, magnetic motors, alternate fuels & engines, high mileage, 200+ topics. Send 6 x Aust 45c stamps to: Lostech Archive, PO Box 456-R, TOLGA, Qld 4882, Australia.

HOME EDUCATION, for info send SAE to: Alternative Education Resource Group, PO Box 461, DAYLESFORD 3460.

'NIMBIN NEWS MAGAZINE', is a cooperatively run access magazine with articles & information from Nimbin and other areas. We cover concerns relevant to alternative lifestyles & others looking for the most sustainable way. We are one of the longest running alternative magazines & the Nimbin bioregion is at the forefront in the development of sustainable systems. As networkers we scan many mags for suitable & scarce information for our readers. Subscription: 6 issues for \$20, sample \$3.50. Back copies 5 for \$12 posted. PO Box 209, NIMBIN 2480.

'NATIVE STINGLESS BEES' for profit or pleasure - how to get started, pollination/honey potential in Qld. Detailed info booklets, packed with photographs, diagrams. For free catalogue, send name, address & 50c stamp to: ANBRC, Box 74-G4, NORTH RICHMOND, NSW 2754.

'NEW VEGETARIAN & NATURAL HEALTH', the magazine of the Natural Health & Vegetarian societies. Subscribe today, \$30 yearly and receive: 4 vital magazines, discounts at participating health food stores and natural therapies practitioners listed in magazine. Head Office, 28/541 High St, PENRITH, NSW 2750. Ph: 02-4721-5068.

'TAGASASTE, TREE LUCERNE', High Production Fodder Crop. We've rediscovered some copies of this useful publication. Ideal fodder to supplement grazing & help bring stock through drought. Every landowner should know about this multi-use plant. Special price \$12 posted from: Grass Roots Publishing, PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661. Ph: 03-5792-4000. Be quick, limited stock.

WANTED TO RENT/CARE-TAKE

COUPLE SEEK PROPERTY TO CARETAKE/develop on share basis, long term. Permaculture, farming & building skills. Prefer warm climate. Contact Radha at: MS 1158 GIN GIN, Qld 4671, or email: raithada@hotmail.com

FARMING COUNTRY ANYWHERE: early retired educator, responsible, practical & green male of Asian extraction seeks modest self-cont tranquil accom. Had various different rural experiences incl k9 obedience training. Prepared to work on WWOOF basis, & has ref to verify, never too old to learn. Please ph: 0405-207-397.

Email: hanlamb@hotmail.com

GRASSIFIEDS

WANTED TO RENT/CARE-TAKE

HOUSESITTER AVAILABLE FROM FEBRUARY. Mature age, n/s, n/d, loves gardens, animals. NSW or Vic. Refs avail. Contact: 02-6332-1670 leave message.

FOOD & KITCHEN

VACOLA BOTTLING & PRESERVING KIT incl 100 jars, rings, clips, instructions & implements. \$200 delivered. Ph: 08-8948-5145.

QUALITY GRAINMILL AND JUICER PRODUCTS, manual & electric, ph: 02-4751-2477. Web: www.jucers.com

HOME STONE FLOUR MILLS – mill your own stonemade wholemeal flour for cakes and bread at home with a Retsel Little Ark stone flour mill. Endorsed by Housewives Association. Write for catalogue to: Retsel Distributors, PO Box 712, DANDEMONG 3175, enc1 3 postage stamps. Ph: 03-9795-2725. Distributor enquiries welcome.

Website: www.retsel.com.au

STONE GROUND FLOUR in-home, with a SCHNITZER German quality hand or electric stone mill, 6 models from \$178. SCHNITZER MILLS, 420 Freemantle Rd, Bathurst 2795. Ph: 02-6336-9100, www.schnitzer.com.au

MISCELLANEOUS

HOW TO MAKE MONEY selling & making chess pieces, bird baths, fine art, gnomes etc. Plaster and/or cement moulds. For methods & catalogue send \$14.95 to: Williams Imports, PO Box 989, SOUTHPORT 4215 (06/50 Railway St). Ph/fax: 07-5532-9050.

Website: www.supermoulds.com.au

HEALTH & BEAUTY

ESSENTIAL OIL STILLS incl stands, commercial quality. 80 lt, \$2300; 430 lt, \$7000. Used one season. New made to order. Ph: Rob, 03-5962-4606.

ESSENTIAL OIL, distilled water. Lavender: Avice Hill, Swampy, Miss Donnington. Rosemary. Ph: Maxine, 03-5962-4606.

WANTED

WANTED BOOK: *Homebuilt Dynamo* by Todd-Forbes Publishing. Could anyone please help? Will pay good price, plus postage. Alice Springs, PO Box 7988, NT 0871.

FELTING MACHINE for felting wool, or alternatively design for felting machine. Ph: 03-5856-1334.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please notify us of any change of contact details so we can redirect enquires. Call us on 03-5792-4000.

**DEADLINES: GR157 – APRIL 25
GR158 – JUNE 25**

GARDEN & ORCHARD

NIMBIN – HERBS FOR SALE: \$2.00; herb of the week – \$1.50; assorted plants \$1.00. Ph: 0427-580-853.

Email: abowes@in.com.au

COMPANION PLANTING CHART: over 90 vegetables, herbs and fruits, including plants as insect repellents. Sow When Chart: Suggested sowing times for 100 vegetables, herbs and flowers. Mail order \$8 each + \$4 p&p. Plum Products (G), PO Box 120, Wards Rd, TAMBO UPPER, 3885.

BAMBOO PLANTS, lge range, best prices. Ph: 07-4129-4470, fax: 07-4129-0130.

RAINFOREST SEED COLLECTORS national link-up. Buy and sell local seed. Our newsletter has lots to offer. Local seed grows better and doesn't pollute your gene pool. Quarterly newsletter subs \$20, concession \$10. Offer local seed – free subs. RSC, Private Mail Bag, BELLINGEN 2454. Ph: 02-6655-2233.

LIVESTOCK

MILKING GOATS – SAANEN & Saanen/Boer cross from \$30. Also 2 Saanen/Boer bucks. Ph: 03-5768-2225.

COLOURED MERINO SHEEP, glorious shadings in full wool. From \$30. Ph: 03-5768-2225.

LARGE BLACK PIGS, rare breed, delightful docile creatures. Help save a breed from extinction. Piglets \$120 ea & willing to foster. Ph: 03-5768-2225.

TOULOUSE GEESE – excel for grazing between vines. From \$30 ea. Ph: 03-5768-2225.

FOR SALE: a flock of rare blue-eyed Piebald sheep. This project started 20 yrs ago & incl selection for blue-eyed specimens. Due to the current difficult conditions, the flock must be dispersed. The flock comprises 9 ewes, 2 rams, 5 female lambs, 1 entire male lamb and 3 wether lambs. The sheep are at Gympie, Qld. Enquiries: Wendy Henningsen, ph: 07-5483-3600, fax: 0500-599-339, mob: 0500-533-339.

FREE LEASE: Beautiful 16 hand 6 yr old Thoroughbred gelding. Good to float, shoe, handle, lots personality. Needs experienced & gentle rider. Comes with rugs etc. Suit showing, pleasure riding. Must go to loving & experienced home, with other horses for company. Ph: Siobhan, 08-9298-9175.

COURSES

THE BENDIGO GRAVEL HILL GARDENS offers Australia's newest PDC in October 2003. Trainers incl permaculturists from Central Victoria, with David Holmgren presenting his revised principles from his latest book. Ph: 03-5470-6394, www.permaculture.biz/salvoPDC

WORKSHOPS COMMENCING SOON: Greywater Recycling, Intro To Permaculture, Pruning, Composting & Worm Farms, Organic Pest Control, Propagation, Herbs, Aromatherapy. Swan Garden Centre, Lot 40 Farrall Rd, MID-VALE, WA 6056. Ph: 08-9250-4575.

Email: swangc@inet.net.au

ONE-DAY WATER SELF-SUFFICIENCY COURSE: Talker: Scott McFarlane, water engineer. Topics: rainwater tanks, water conservation, greywater reuse, compost toilets. Location: CERES, Lee St, BRUNSWICK EAST. Times: 10am – 5pm, 6 April, 4 May, 1 June. Booking: 03-5175-0895.

Email: mcfarlanes@netspace.net.au

PERMACULTURE RESEARCH INSTITUTE: The PRI offers courses in permaculture design and related subjects throughout the year. Call 02-6688-6222 or visit www.permaculture.org.au

CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAMS: Aromatherapy Dip, Vitamin & Nutrition Therapy Dip, Animal Therapies (The Green Vet), Herbal Therapies, Folk Medicine, Psychic Healing, Celtic Wicca, Psychic Development. Free brochure from: Wiccan Home Studies (estab 25 yrs), The Friendly School, PO Box 138, SURRY HILLS 2010. Ph: 02-9319-6166.

Email: owhome@ozemail.com.au

PERMACULTURE DESIGN COURSES with Rick & Naomi Coleman, Southern Cross Permaculture Institute. Next course Easter/Nov. 2003 Call Naomi: 03-5664-3301 for info or email: scpi@tpg.com.au website: www.southern-cross-permaculture.com.au

SERVICES OFFERED

RONITA, INDIAN CLAIRVOYANT, \$35 for 15 mins (credit cards). Ph: 03-5176-2521, or 1902-213-221 from 11am – 8pm. Online secure payments. Website: www.ronitapsychic.com

HOME PLANS. *The Earth Builders Plan Catalogue* (180 pages), includes: 92 plans for handcrafted buildings (83 homes & 9 workshops, cabins & carport) of mudbrick, rammed earth, stone, poleframe, timber, poured earth, strawbale, construction details; a working drawing of a small loft floor home (11 x A3 sheets) is included. Mail \$95 (post & pack incl) to John Barton – Building Design, 89 Camden Road, NEWTOWN, Vic 3220. Enquiries to 03-5222-5774 for fixed quote to draw & document your home plan. Cheques, Mastercard, Bankcard, Visa accepted. Free brochure available by snail mail. Website: jbdesign.4w4.net Email: jbarton@pipeline.com.au

COST OF ADS

Cost of Grassified ads does not include any extra formatting: extra bold text, indents, spaces, stars or other symbols. If you require an ad with formatting please enquire about our display advertising rates. Call Sue on 03-5792-4000.

GRASSIFIEDS

HOLIDAYS

MORUYA - FAR SOUTH COAST NSW, bush cabins, romantic 1 b/r & family 2 b/rs. Big open fires. Horses, dogs welcome by arrangement. \$350 pw, \$140 per w/end. Ph: 02-4474-2542.

LAMINGTON GLEN RAINFOREST RETREAT, secluded self-contained cabin, visit our award winning gardens, slab hut set in nature r/forest surrounding. Ph/fax: 07-5544-8166.

FINCH HATTON GORGE, Eungella Nat Pk Qld. Platypus bush camp, camping & tree huts, great walking area, the alternative holiday. Ph: 07-4958-3204. Website: www.bushcamp.net

HANDCRAFTS

STRANDED COTTON BUNDLES, 100 x 8 m skeins, 50 colours - \$22 post free. Big bundles stranded cotton, 230 colours - \$50 post free. Weaving reeds, 8-15 dents. Send 50c stamp for list. ARTY & CRAFTY, PO Box 40, DAW PARK, SA 5041. Ph: 08-8277-3763, fax: 08-8277-9402.

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PLACING AN AD?
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CLUBS

NATIONAL ALLERGY ASSOCIATION of Australia (NAAA) and ECO-CHOICE (our mail-order store). Enquiries; information; clinics; membership & catalogue. Contact NAAA, PO Box 48, HARRIS PARK, NSW 2150. Ph: 0415-928-028.

Email: naaaauz@yahoo.com

AFFILIATED DONKEY SOCIETIES OF AUSTRALIA. For info on membership, magazines and help avail write to Ms Ann Fletcher, 74 Bells Lane, KURMOND, NSW 2757. You will be contacted by the representative in your state.

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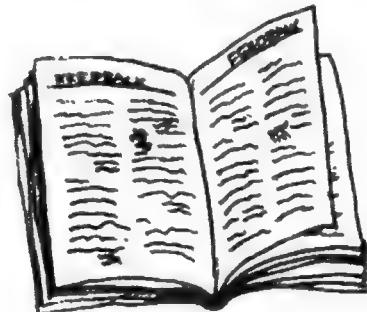
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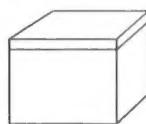
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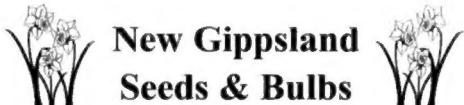


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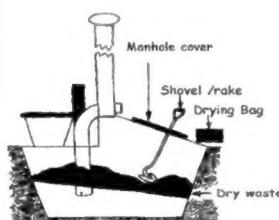
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